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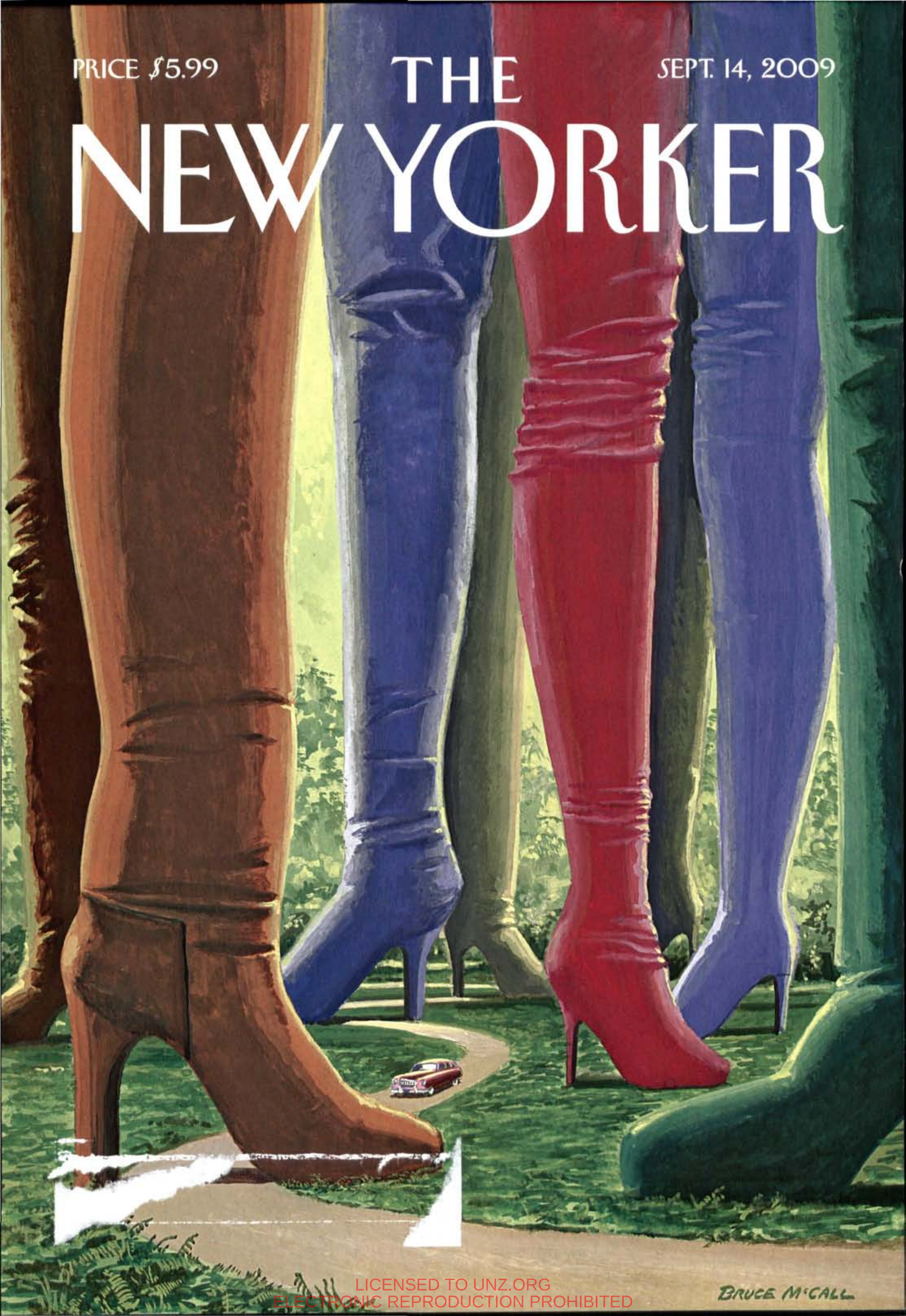
THE NEW YORKER

SEPT. 14, 2009



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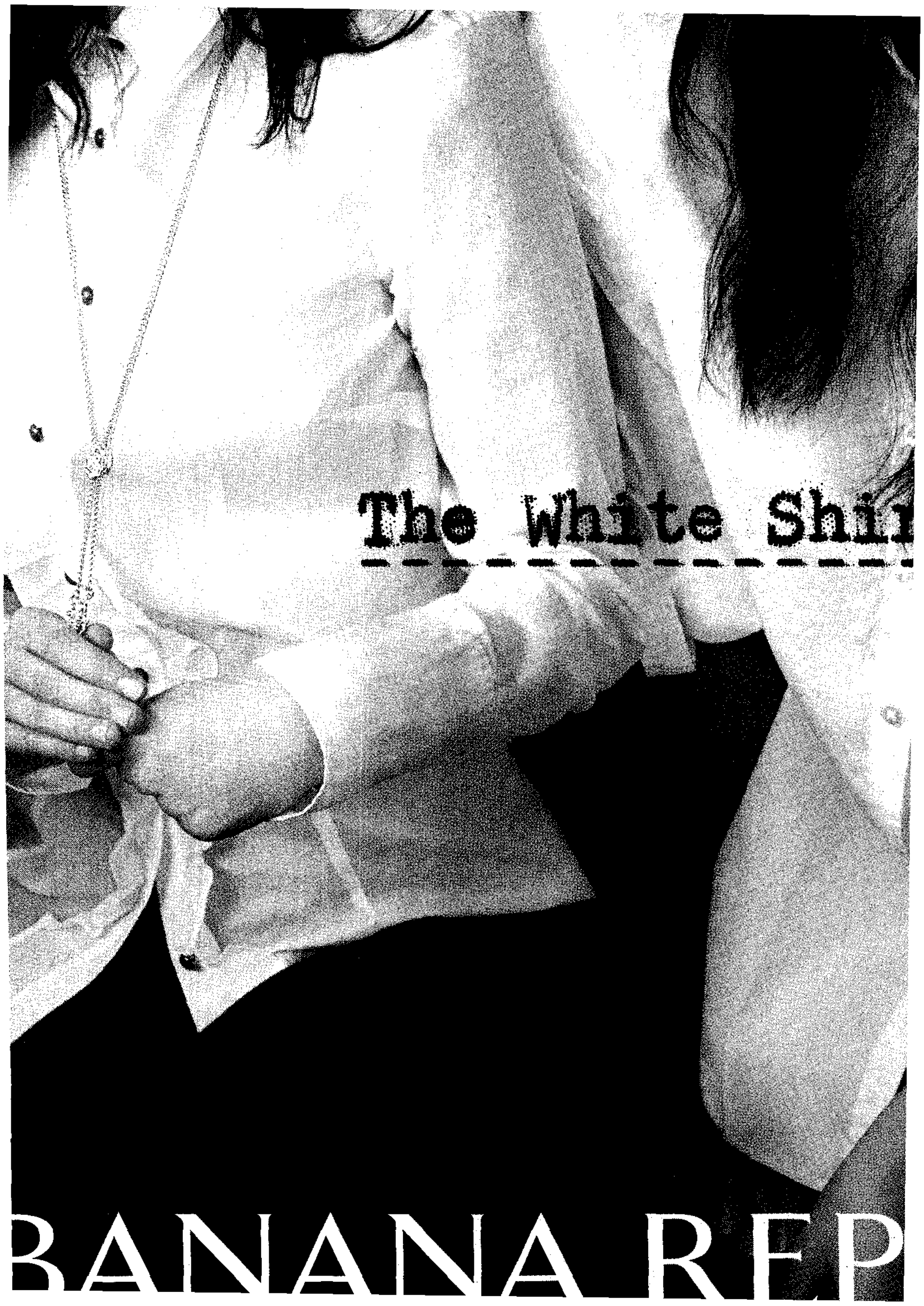
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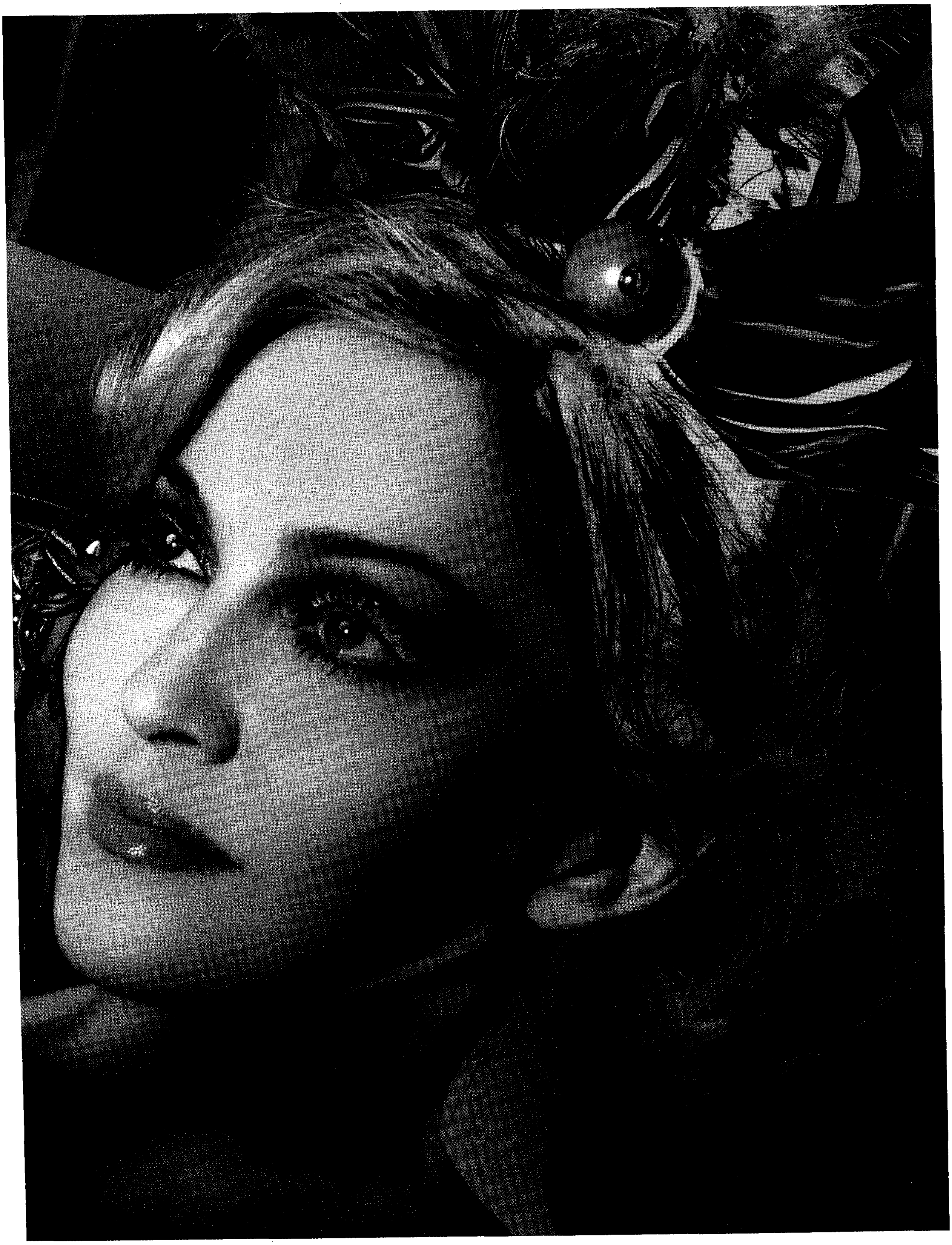

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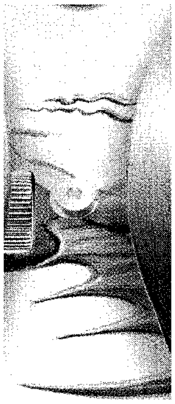

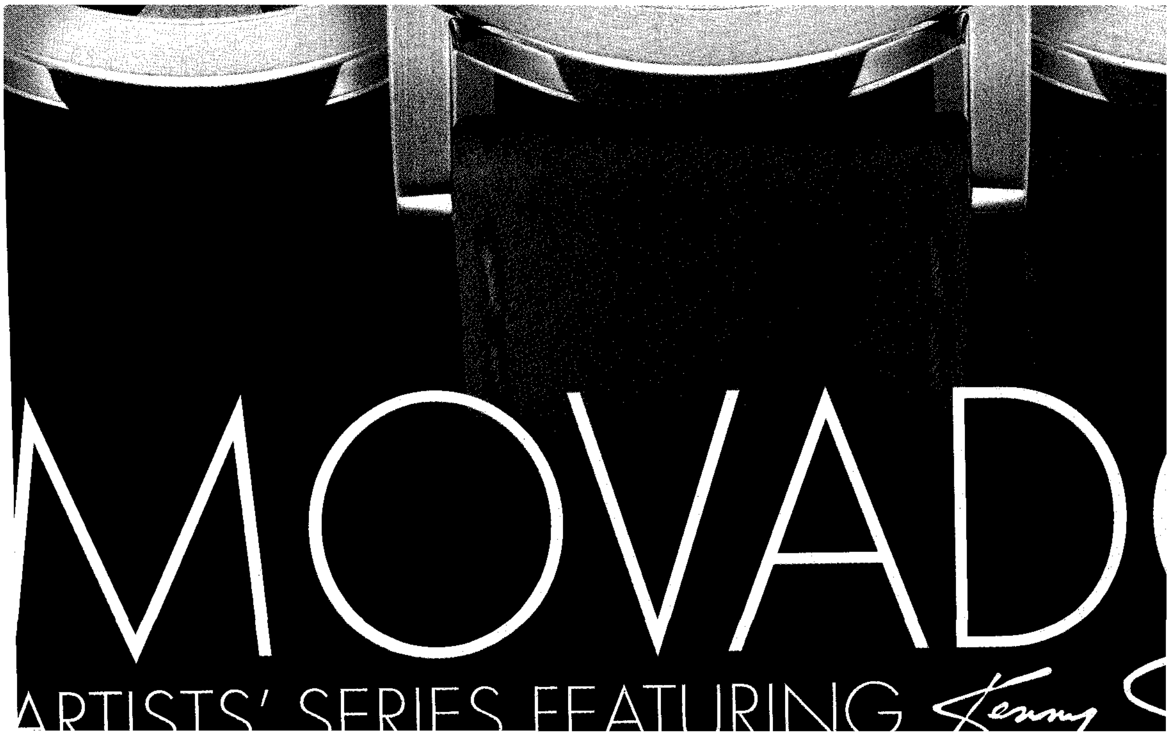
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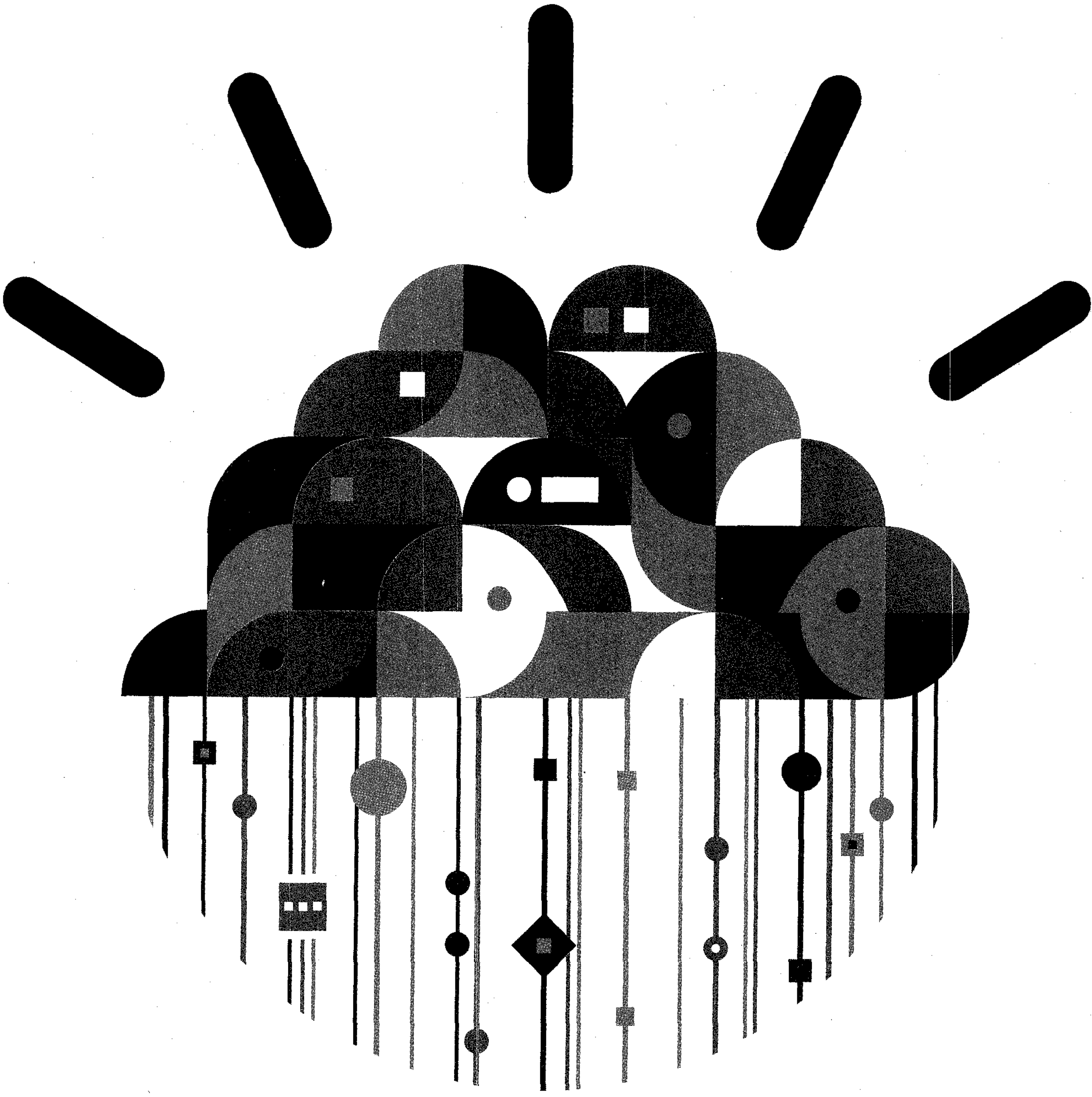

Conversations for a Smarter Planet

Smarter clouds on the horizon.

In previous installments of this ongoing conversation, we have talked about the need for information technology itself to become smarter. Despite enormous advances in computing power, the world's IT infrastructure—already under severe stress from today's computing tasks—could easily become overwhelmed by the onrushing complexity and unprecedented data generated by nearly a trillion instrumented and interconnected devices, objects, processes and people.

Fortunately, help is at hand. It comes in the form of a new model called "cloud computing," in which processing, storage, networking and applications are accessed as services over networks—public, via the Internet; or private, via intranets. It makes possible a new level of system intelligence—also known as "service management"—with the potential to secure, authenticate, customize and just plain keep up with the coming wave of data complexity and volume.

Importantly, just as the clouds above us are differentiated—cirrus, stratus, cumulus—the smart clouds of a smarter planet will develop around particular tasks. They will be optimized for workloads as diverse as software development and virtual desktops, as smarter traffic management and smarter retail.

Some will enable entire business and civic ecosystems to function more smoothly. For instance, consider the city of Wuxi in southeastern China, which developed a "cloud services factory" to provide computing resources to local companies. Software developers can access new resources in minutes, and new businesses can hit the ground running. Wuxi now has the potential to provide services to hundreds of small and medium-sized companies, which represent the future of a city that sees itself as an engine for growth.

Some clouds will extend the capabilities of a smarter planet to communities with limited resources. Thanks to a private education cloud, the 12-year-old computers of the Pike County School System in eastern Kentucky now behave more like 2009 models. This has enabled the county to cut 62% of its schools' end-user support costs, while providing equal access to education content across 27 schools. Most importantly, Pike's 10,000 students can now access new courseware instantly—something that used to take more than a year.

And some clouds will help provide more secure and stable public services when it matters most. Following Hurricane Ike in 2008, Houston was plagued by downed trees and power lines — but the nonprofit human services agency Neighborhood Centers Inc., with its system data backed up in a cloud, didn't suffer a single business disruption at any of its 20 facilities. Following the storm, the agency was back in business, providing support to families in need.

Around the world, IBM is working with banks, telecommunications providers, retail firms, governments and universities to use clouds to optimize for specific economic and societal goals, and to infuse their technology systems with IBM's unique depth of expertise. All because smarter clouds are now gathering on the horizon.

Let's build a smarter planet. Join us and see what others are thinking at **ibm.com**/smarterplanet

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THE STYLE ISSUE

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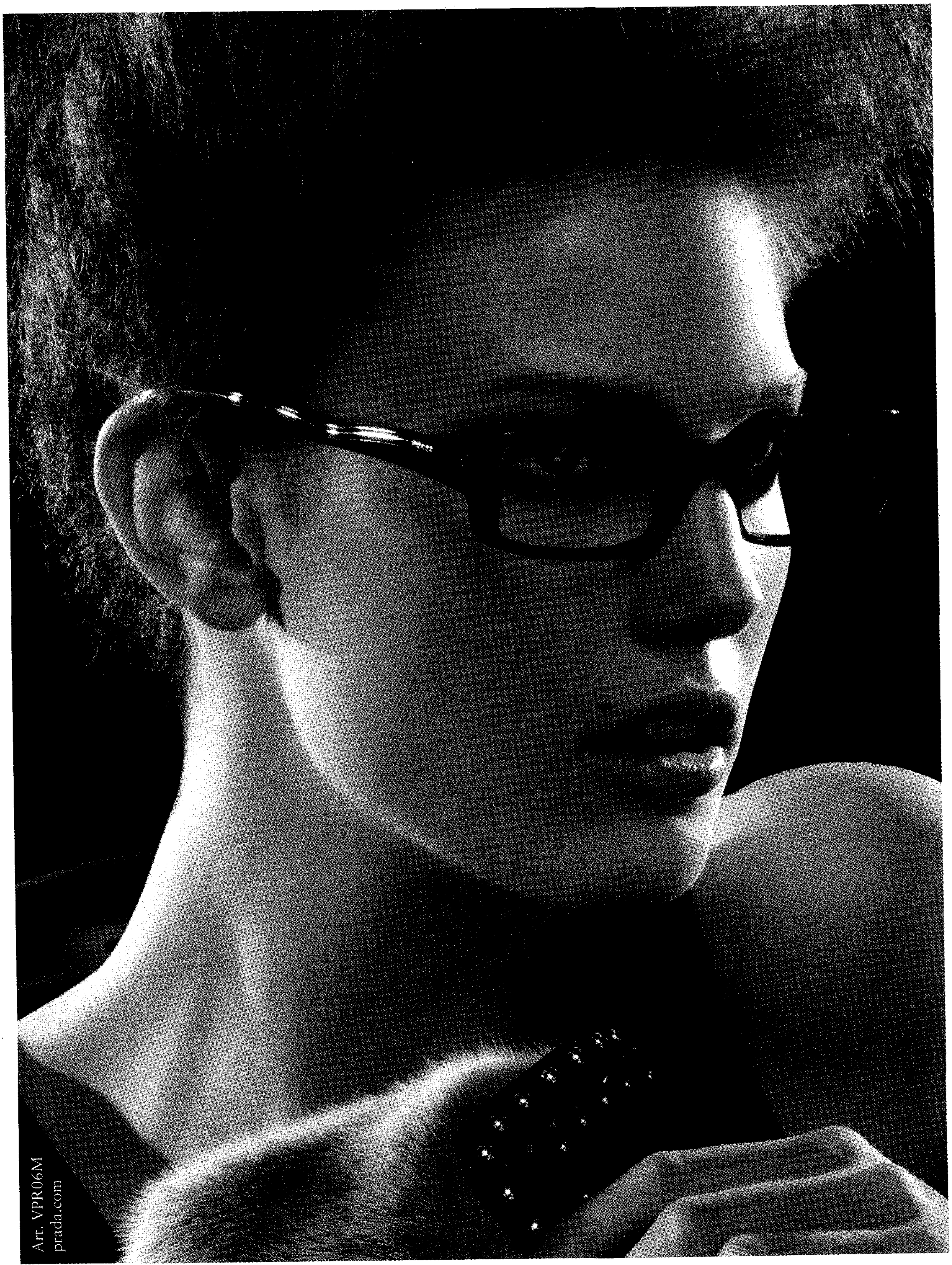
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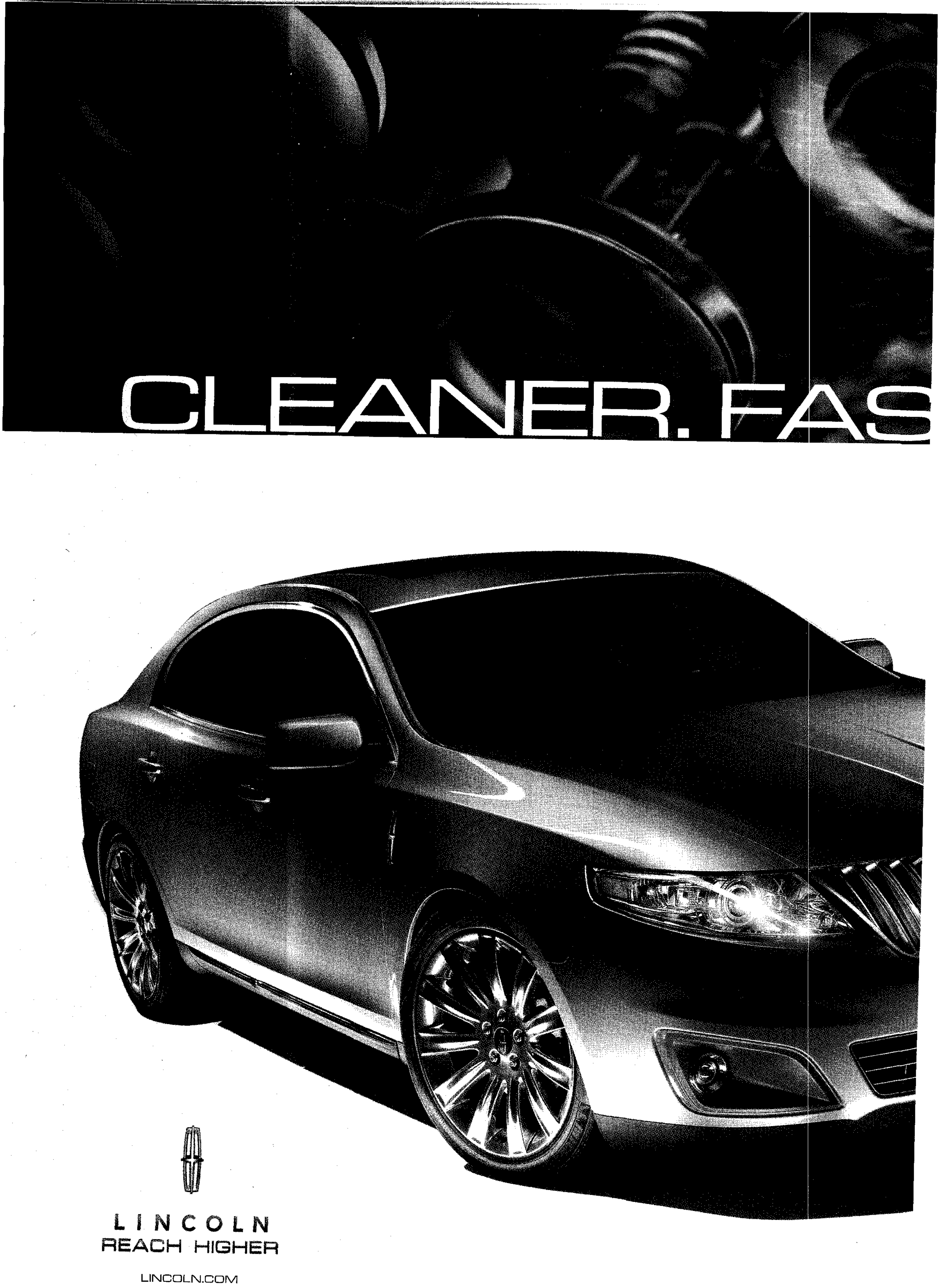
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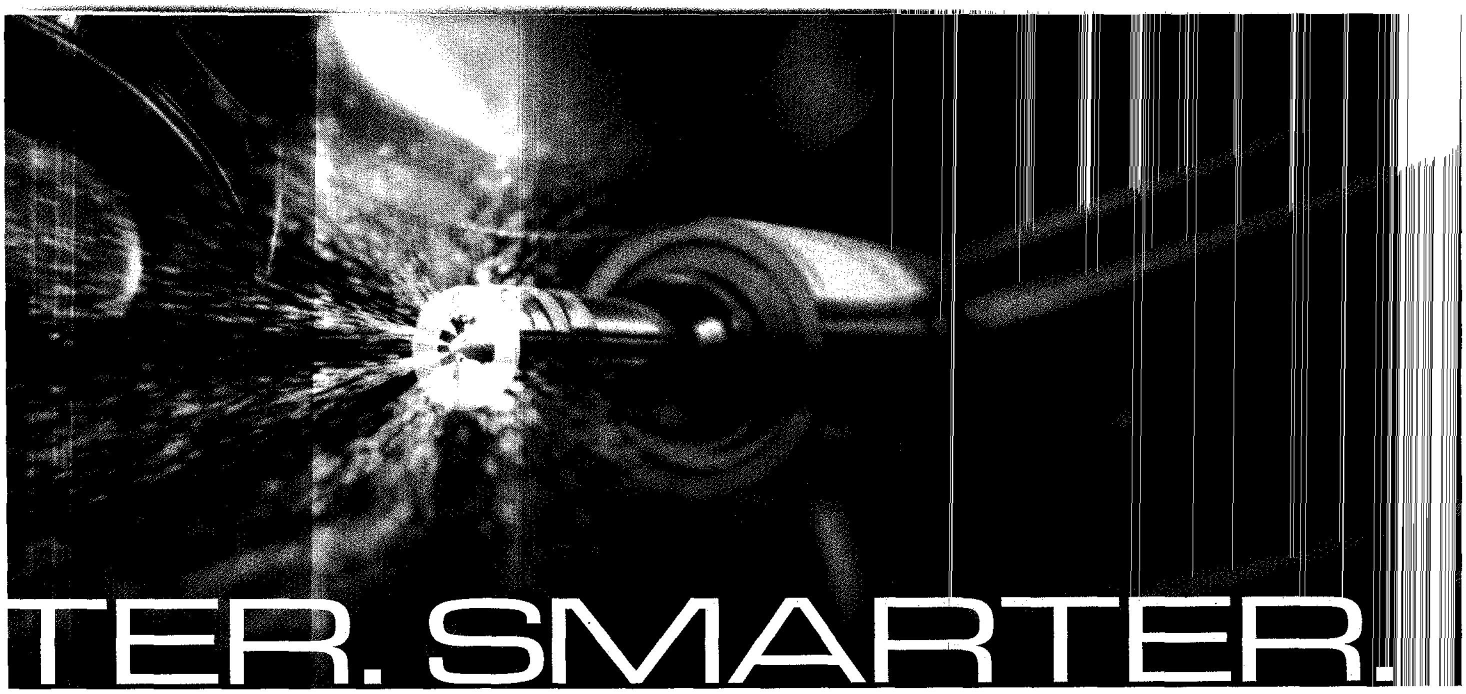

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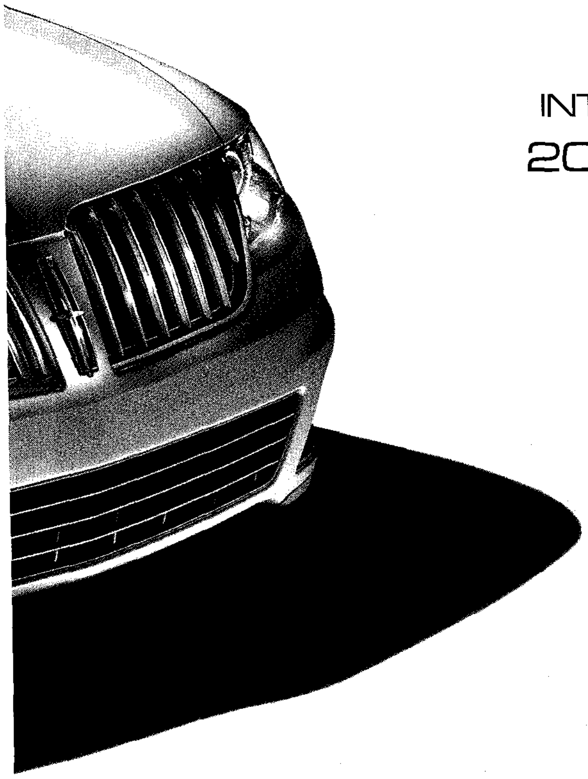

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POEMS
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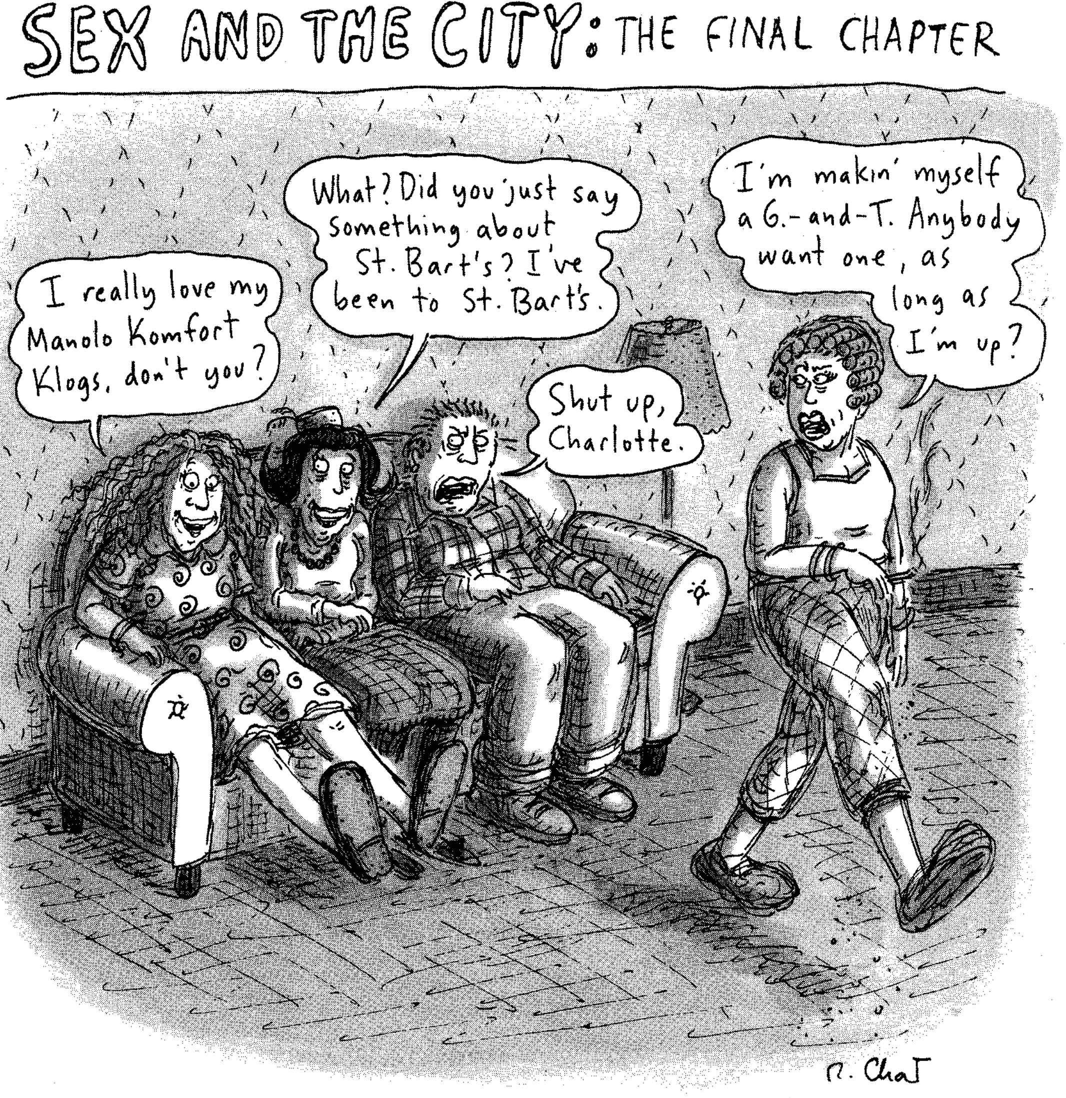
Bruce McCall COVER
"Step Into Style"

DRAWINGS *Roz Chast, Lee Lorenz, Kim Warp, Danny Shanahan, Joe Dator, Carolita Johnson, William Haefeli, Frank Cotham, Jason Patterson, Drew Dernavich, Matthew Diffee, Leo Cullum, Michael Maslin, Gahan Wilson, Charles Barsotti, Zachary Kanin, Sam Gross*

SPOTS *Benoît van Innis*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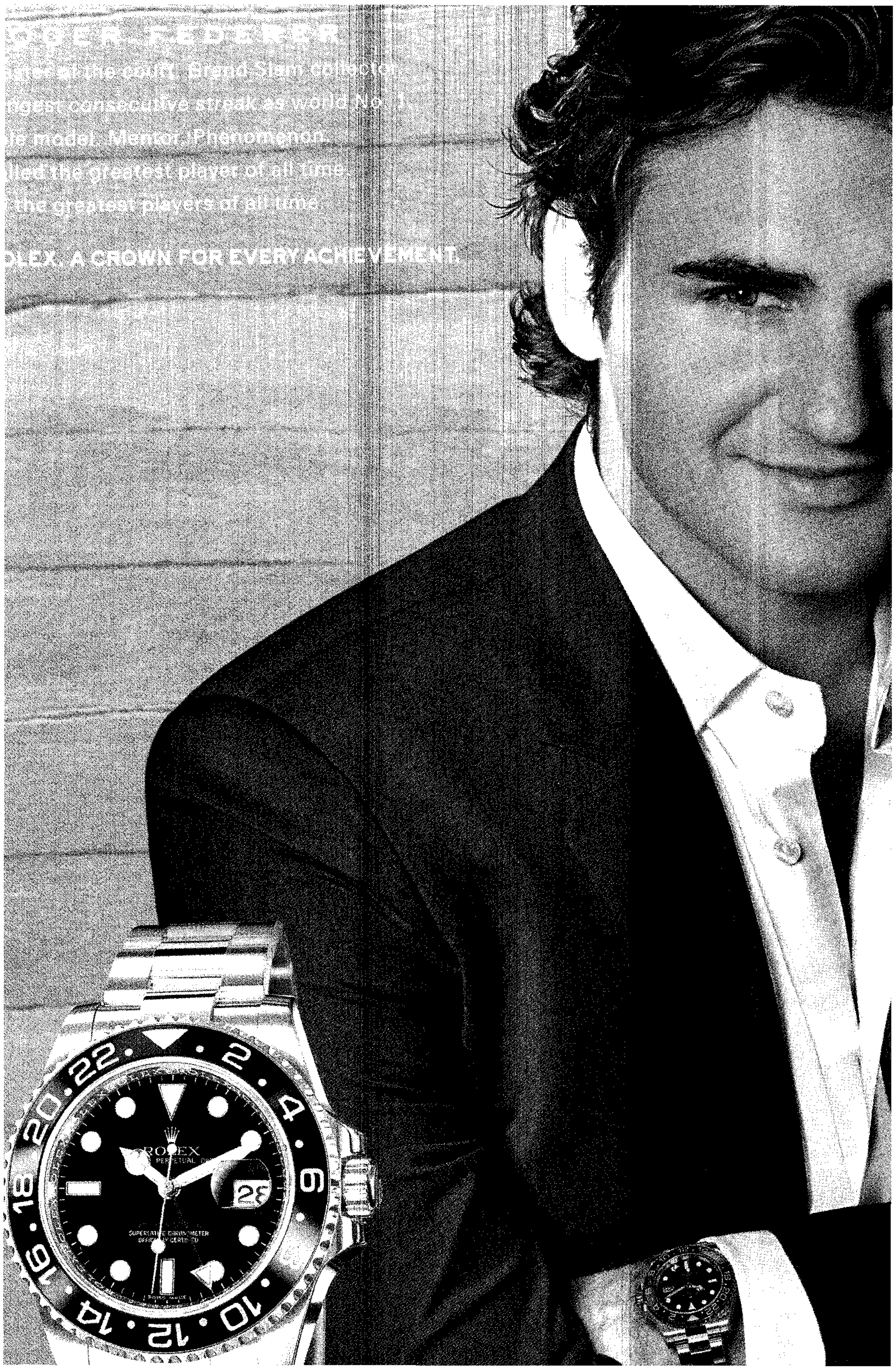
I really love my Manolo Komfort Klogs, don't you?
What? Did you just say something about St. Bart's? I've been to St. Bart's.
Shut up, Charlotte.
I'm makin' myself a G.-and-T. Anybody want one, as long as I'm up?
R. Chast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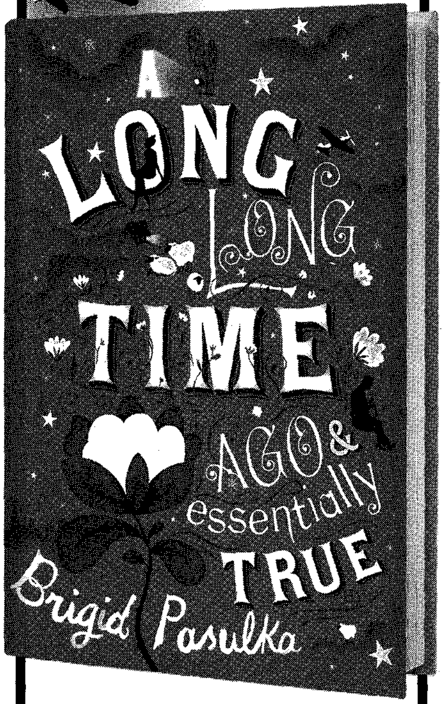
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"Rings hauntingly, enchantingly real."
—*National Geographic Traveler*

"Magical."—*BookPage*

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CONTRIBUTORS

Patricia Marx ("Chicago Style," p. 48) writes for film and television. She is the author of, most recently, "Dot in Larryland," with illustrations by Roz Chast.

Lauren Collins (Comment, p. 41; "Check Mate," p. 72) is a staff writer.

Robert Sullivan (The Talk of the Town, p. 45) published "The Thoreau You Don't Know: What the Prophet of Environmentalism Really Meant" in March.

Ian Frazier (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 54) is a longtime contributor. His book of essays "Lamentations of the Father" came out in paperback in May.

Justin Quinn (Poem, p. 53) will publish his fifth collection of poems, "In Marble," this winter. He lives in Prague, where he teaches at Charles University.

Dana Goodyear ("Lady of the House," p. 60) is a staff writer who lives in Los Angeles.

Alexandra Jacobs ("Happy Feet," p. 66), an editor-at-large at the New York *Observer*, is a co-editor of "The Kingdom of New York," which comes out in November.

Bruce McCall (Cover) contributes regularly to the magazine.

Anthony Lane ("Road Show," p. 84; The Current Cinema, p. 114) is a staff writer and a film critic for the magazine, and the author of "Nobody's Perfect: Writings from *The New Yorker*."

Tom Sleigh (Poem, p. 78), who teaches at Hunter College, has a new book of poems, "Army Cats," coming out next year.

Ruven Afanador (Showcase, p. 82), a fashion and portrait photographer, will publish his third book, "Mil Besos," next month.

Paul Theroux (Fiction, p. 92) is the author of many works of fiction, including the forthcoming "A Dead Hand." His latest travel book, "Ghost Train to the Eastern Star," is out in paperback.

Judith Thurman (A Critic at Large, p. 102) has written, among other books, two biographies, "Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller" and "Secrets of the Flesh: A Life of Colette."

James Schuyler (Poem, p. 105), who died in 1991, won a Pulitzer Prize for poetry for "The Morning of the Poem." A collection of unpublished poems, "Other Flowers," edited by James Meetze and Simon Pettet, is due out in April.

THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM

Sasha Frere-Jones chats with readers about Nine Inch Nails. / *Alexandra Jacobs* talks about Zappos on the New Yorker Out Loud podcast. / *Dorothy Wickenden* hosts the Political Scene, a weekly audio roundtable. / Slide show: Photographs from *Robert Frank's* "The Americans." / Blogs: *Hendrik Hertzberg* on politics, *James Surowiecki* on the economy, *Evan Osnos's* Letter from China, *Amy Davidson's* Close Read, *Macy Halford* on books, *Richard Brody* on movies, and humor from the Cartoon Lounge. / Animated cartoons, the caption contest, and a complete archive of issues, back to 1925.

THE MAIL

TALKING BACK

It worries me that a broadcaster who is as confused and hate-filled as Michael Savage receives sympathy at Kelefa Sanneh's hands ("Party of One," August 3rd). Calling him a "political idealist" is like calling Osama bin Laden a construction engineer. It may be important to forgive, but it is equally important not to condone his sort of extremist language and behavior. We hold freedom of speech dear, but accept that it imposes responsibilities of the sort that Savage is obviously not stable enough to understand. I regret the day the media decided that, because objectivity is not quite possible, it is not even worth striving for, and thus abandoned civilized restraint.
Gordon McLauchlan
Auckland, New Zealand

I agree with Sanneh that Savage's show is "weird." I'm not going to say that it isn't "entertaining," because listening to a crazy person rant about whatever pops into his head definitely is not boring. But Savage's show isn't parody. Certainly his audience does not perceive it that way. When Savage calls the President the moral equivalent of a Nazi, or pours gasoline on the racist "birther" fire, or calls for liberals to be strung up for treason, or denounces homosexuals, or says shockingly racist things about all Muslims worldwide, he is taken seriously by many in his audience. I don't doubt that Savage is a perfectly nice person to have a beer with on his porch, particularly if he knows you're going to write about him for a national magazine. But he is relevant to most of us only for what he says on the radio. And a high percentage of what he says, however "engrossing" Sanneh may find it, is utterly vile.
Dana Simpson
Kent, Wash.

Savage's hypocrisy was fully demonstrated during the court fight he initiated against the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) in 2007, which went unmentioned in Sanneh's Profile. Savage represented himself as the voice of freedom and a defender of First Amendment rights. He was upset that CAIR had reproduced snippets of a broadcast, which it used to encourage advertisers to boycott Savage's show. CAIR accused him of anti-Muslim sentiment; Savage accused CAIR of copyright infringement and of misrepresenting his views, disingenuously donning the dual mantle of First Amendment crusader and victim of copyright "theft." Citing the fair-use doctrine—a federal law that allows copyrighted material to be reproduced without permission in exactly the way that CAIR reproduced Savage's material—the judge ruled against Savage. Had he won, his victory would have set a legal precedent that would have weakened First Amendment rights, not strengthened them.
Tony Kondaks
Mesa, Ariz.

I find Savage's show infuriating, educational, intoxicating, and even inspiring, and I was very surprised to see a balanced and thoughtful report on the man and the show. So often he is marginalized in the media, yet he really is an American voice (albeit extremely offensive and willfully politically incorrect at times), who represents both free speech and the public's growing desire not to hear the same homogenized rhetoric in our era of junk journalism. I would call myself a member of the Savage Nation, but I think that Savage would have a heart attack if he knew my stances; either that or we would sit down with a Scotch and a cigar and solve the world's problems in the course of a night. That is the paradox of the man.
Michael J. Oxenrider
Chicago, Ill.

•

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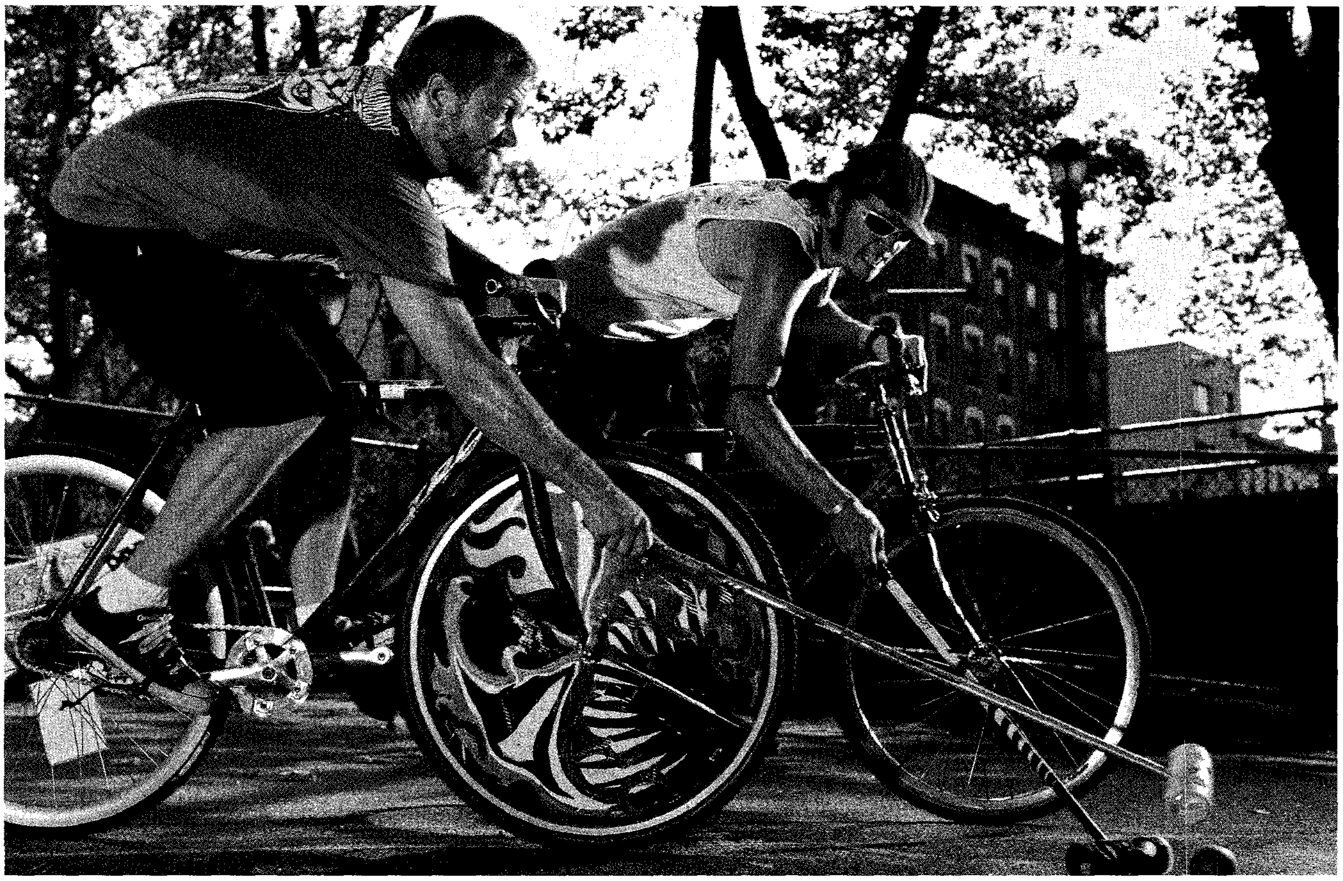


Bike polo in Sara D. Roosevelt Park. Photograph by Brian Finke.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
13	14	15	9	10	11	12

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
DON'T FIX IT

Nathan Louis Jackson, whose new play, "Broke-ology," begins previews at the Mitzi E. Newhouse, graduated from Juilliard just this past May. His drama involves a college graduate who returns home to Kansas, where his brother still lives, to care for his ailing father. Thomas Kail directs. (See page 18.)

NIGHT LIFE
POOLE PARTY

In the nineteen-twenties, the hard-living singer and banjo player Charlie Poole led his string band, the North Carolina Ramblers, to great popularity and paved the way for country and bluegrass greats like Hank Williams and Bill Monroe. Loudon Wainwright III recently paid tribute to Poole with a new double album, "High Wide & Handsome," and he comes to the Highline Ballroom. (See page 22.)

ART
ON GOLDEN POND

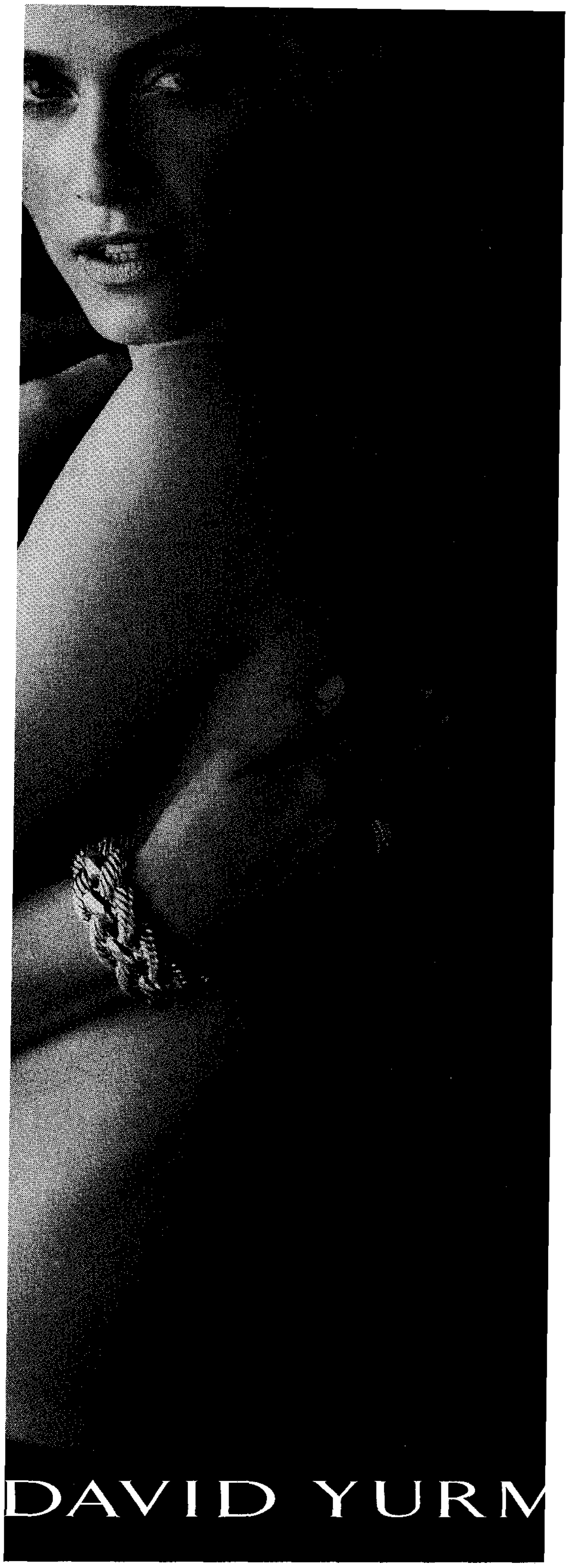
Although the Monet "Water Lilies" in MOMA's collection were painted in Giverny, they became part of the New York landscape. For the first time since reopening, in 2004, the museum will exhibit the three masterpieces together, alongside two related late canvases on loan from other institutions. (See page 26.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
MOTHER'S DAY

Tobias Picker began his career in American opera with "Emmeline," an adaptation of the Judith Rossner novel, which sets the Oedipus myth in nineteenth-century New England. Dicapo Opera offers the first staging of the work in New York in eleven years. (See page 32.)

MOVIES
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

MOMA launches a remarkably ambitious series that gets to the heart of the movies. "An Auteurist History of Film," which will run for two years, draws on the museum's own holdings to reveal the art of the director. This week's offerings start with the cinema's prehistory, with the documentaries "Origins of the Motion Picture" and "Eadweard Muybridge, Zoopraxographer." (See page 37.)



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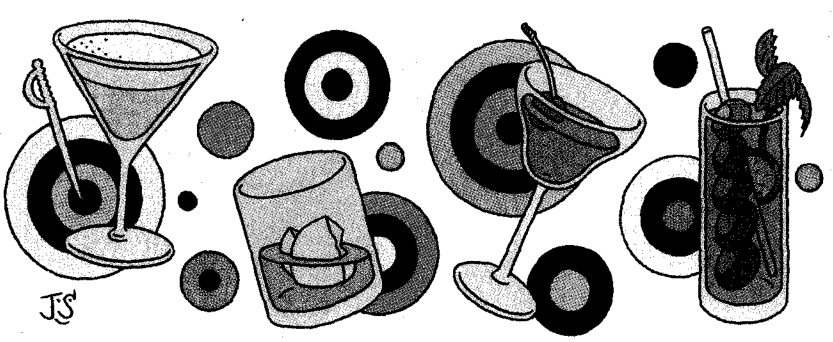


FACTORY SHIFT
Few night clubs have the staying power or the reputation of the Knitting Factory. When it first opened, on Houston Street, more than two decades ago, it was a premier spot for edgy, experimental music. It moved to a tri-level space in Tribeca in 1994, and enjoyed a successful fifteen-year run there, though the programming went a little soft in the process. Now the club begins a third phase, in Williamsburg, and the outer-borough locale bodes well for a return to more radical fare. The new space sports windows salvaged from the Brooklyn Navy Yard and a restored, thirties-era bar from West Virginia. It opens on Sept. 9 with the local art-rockers Les Savy Fav, and upcoming shows include Extra Golden (with its mixture of Kenyan benga music and American rock), on Sept. 23; the math-rockers Maps and Atlases, on Oct. 4; and the veteran bassist Melissa Auf der Maur, on Oct. 17. (361 Metropolitan Ave., Williamsburg. 347-529-6696.)

ALL MIXED UP
In recent years, the American cocktail has experienced a resurgence. Bartenders (or, as they sometimes prefer to be called, mixologists) take extra pride in old classics and introduce specialty drinks at an increasingly rapid rate. They use gargantuan ice cubes (the bigger the cube, the less it melts and dilutes a drink). Bars have multi-page drink menus. There hasn't been this much excitement about drinking since the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, in 1933. The Manhattan Cocktail Classic, a two-day event celebrating recent developments behind the bar, is scheduled for next May. On Oct. 3-4, though, the writers Dale Degroff and David Wondrich, the bar owners Sasha Petraske and Audrey Saunders, and other leaders of this remarkable movement are serving up a preview. They'll be giving lectures, mixing drinks, and telling tales at the Astor Center, an event space above, what else, a wine-and-liquor store in NoHo. (www.manhattancocktailclassic.com.)

CONEY ISLAND BABIES
Bowlmor Lanes, the long-standing cavernous bowling alley near Union Square, is renovating its sixteen-thousand-square-foot top-floor lounge, formerly a club called Pressure, and turning it into a Coney Island-inspired fun house called Carnival. Slated to open in October, it will feature circus performers, boardwalk-style games, and alcoholic treats made using snow cones and cotton candy. It will also be open during the day, when children will be welcome. (110 University Pl., between 12th and 13th Sts. 212-255-8188.)

CONCERTS
The saxophonist Ornette Coleman, making his Rose Theatre début on Sept. 26, kick-starts the new season at Jazz at Lincoln Center. ♦ The rapper 50 Cent, the release of whose long-awaited new album, "Before I Self Destruct," has been pushed back to November, headlines a big show on Governors Island on Oct. 3. ♦ Os Mutantes, the legendary Tropicália band, recently released its first album of new material in three decades; the group plays Webster Hall on Oct. 8. ♦ Contemporary big bands that are reinvigorating the genre take center stage at the Bell House on Oct. 19. Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, Travis Sullivan's Bjorkestra, and Andrew Durkin's Industrial Jazz Group lead the charge. ♦ The folk-rocker Richard Thompson plays a series of all-request shows at City Winery Oct. 21-23.

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

AFTERMATH
Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen ("The Exonerated") wrote this play, based on a collection of interviews with Iraqi civilians who fled Iraq for Jordan on March 20, 2003. Blank directs. In previews. Opens Sept. 15. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE BEREAVED
Partial Comfort presents a new play by Thomas Bradshaw, about a lawyer who supports her teenage son and unemployed husband, and discovers that she has a fatal heart condition. May Adrales directs. Opens Sept. 9. (The Wild Project, 195 E. 3rd St. 212-352-3101.)

BLIND LEMON BLUES
York Theatre Company opens its season with a musical set in 1948, about Blind Lemon Jefferson, a street musician turned blues recording star. Co-created by Alan Govenar and Akin Babatunde, who also directs and choreographs. In previews. Opens Sept. 15. (Theatre at St. Peter's, 54th St. at Lexington Ave. 212-935-5820.)

A BOY AND HIS SOUL
At the Vineyard, Colman Domingo wrote and performs this play set to soul music, about a young black man in Philadelphia in the eighties. Tony Kelly directs. In previews. (108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

BRAAKLAND
As part of the New Island Festival, on Governors Island, co-presented by P.S. 122, Compagnie Dakar stages this play, about nine people wandering around an unnamed land. Lotte Van den Berg directs. Opens Sept. 10. (To get there, take the Governors Island Ferry, which departs from the Battery Maritime Building. 212-352-3101.)

BROKE-OLOGY
In Nathan Louis Jackson's new play, a young man returns from college in Connecticut to his Kansas home, where his brother still lives, to care for his sick father. Thomas Kail directs the Lincoln Center Theatre production. Previews begin Sept. 10. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

BYE BYE BIRDIE
John Stamos, Gina Gershon, Nolan Gerard Funk, Jayne Houdyshell, and Bill Irwin star in the 1960 musical, directed and choreographed by Robert Longbottom, about a fifties-era teen idol. With a book by Michael Stewart, lyrics by Lee Adams, and music by Charles Strouse. The Roundabout production opens the new Henry Miller's Theatre. Previews begin Sept. 10. (124 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.)

THE CONFIDENCE MAN
Woodshed Collective performs a play by Paul Cohen, based on Herman Melville's 1857 novel, about a riverboat con artist, staged aboard the decommissioned U.S. Coast Guard ship Lilac, which is docked in the Hudson River. In previews. (North side of Pier 40, West St. at Houston St. Tickets, which are free, may be reserved at www.brownpapertickets.com.)

FRINGENYC ENCORE SERIES
Hits and award winners from this year's festival—including "Mom—A Rock Concert Musical" and "The K of D, an Urban Legend"—are remounted. Visit www.fringenyc-encoreseries.com for a full schedule. Opens Sept. 10. (Various locations. 866-468-7619.)

HAMLET
Jude Law stars in the Donmar Warehouse production that originated in London's West End. Michael Grandage directs. Previews begin Sept. 12. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

I GOT SICK THEN I GOT BETTER
Jenny Allen wrote and performs this comic one-woman show, about the ramifications of her bout with ovarian cancer. James Lapine and Darren Katz direct, at New York Theatre Workshop. Opens Sept. 14; Mondays only. (79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

IN THE DAYLIGHT
John Gould Rubin directs a new play by Tony Glazer, about a writer who visits his family, from whom he has long been estranged. A Choice Theatricals production, in association with Vital Theatre Company. Concetta Tomei and Joe Urla star. In previews. (McGinn/Cazale, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. 212-246-4422.)

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?
Mint Theatre Company presents a revival of Lennox Robinson's comedy from 1933, about a travelling theatre company that wreaks havoc in a small Irish seaside village when it arrives to perform its classic repertory. Jonathan Bank directs. In previews. Opens Sept. 14. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231.)

LET ME DOWN EASY
In her one-woman show, Anna Deavere Smith channels subjects she interviewed about the resilience of the human body. Directed by Leonard Foglia. Previews begin Sept. 15. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE—THE MUSICAL
The musical based on the books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, which premièred at the Guthrie, comes to New Jersey's Paper Mill Playhouse. Melissa Gilbert stars, as Ma. With music by Rachel Portman, a book by Rachel Sheinkin, and lyrics by Donna Dinovelli. Francesca Zambello directs. Previews begin Sept. 10. (22 Brookside Dr., Millburn, N.J. 973-376-4343.)

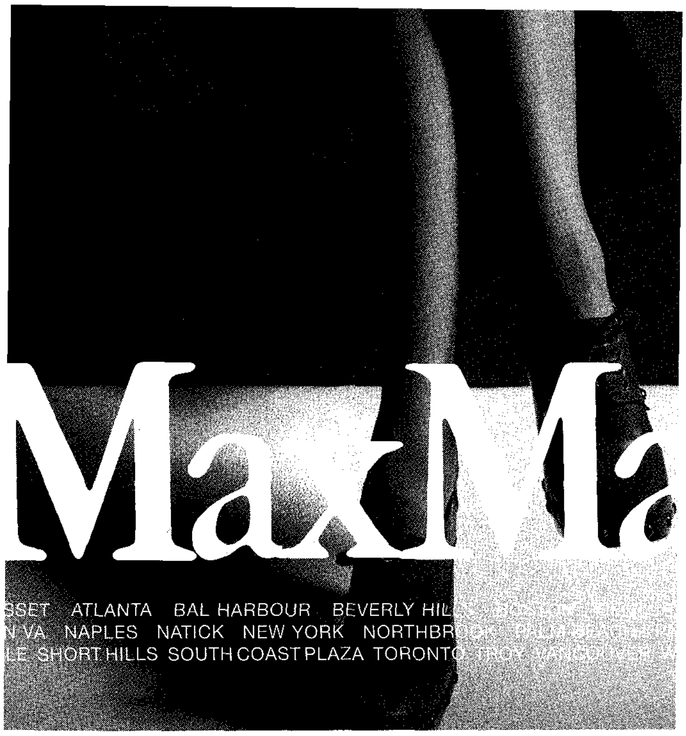
LIZZIE BORDEN
Steven Cheslik-DeMeyer, Tim Maner, and Alan Stevens Hewitt wrote this rock musical, about the infamous murder suspect. Maner directs. Previews begin Sept. 10. Opens Sept. 12. (Living Theatre, 21 Clinton St. 212-352-3101.)

OOHRAH!
Bekah Brunstetter's new play, set in North Carolina, focusses on the complicated relationships in a Southern military family. Directed by Evan Cabnet. In previews. Opens Sept. 10. (Atlantic Stage 2, at 330 W. 16th St. 212-279-4200.)

OTHELLO
John Ortiz and Philip Seymour Hoffman star in the Shakespeare tragedy, directed by Peter Sellars, in a Public Theatre/LAByrinth production. Previews begin Sept. 12. (Skirball Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-352-3101.)

THE PIED PIPERS OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE
The Amoralists' revival of this 2007 comedy, written by the group's co-founder Derek Ahonen, about

JOOST SWARTE


MaxMa
SSET ATLANTA BAL HARBOUR BEVERLY HILLS
N VA NAPLES NATICK NEW YORK NORTHBROOK PALM BEACH
LE SHORT HILLS SOUTH COAST PLAZA TORONTO TROY VANCOUVER

a commune of young utopianists, transfers to an Off Broadway venue. Opens Sept. 10. (Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. 212-352-3101.)

THE PROVENANCE OF BEAUTY
Foundry Theatre ("Telephone") offers a travelogue performed on a bus tour of the South Bronx, written by the poet Claudia Rankine and directed by Melanie Joseph and Shawn Sides. In previews. Opens Sept. 13. (The bus leaves from the Elmendorf Reformed Church, at 171 E. 121st St., between Lexington and Third Aves. For reservations, which are required, call 866-811-4111.)

THE RETRIBUTIONISTS
Playwrights Horizons begins its season with a new thriller by Daniel Goldfarb, about a group of Jewish freedom fighters in 1946. Leigh Silverman directs. In previews. Opens Sept. 14. (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

THE ROYAL FAMILY
Manhattan Theatre Club presents the 1927 comedy by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber, about the idiosyncrasies of a family of stage actors. The cast includes Ana Gasteyer, Larry Pine, Tony Roberts, John Glover, Rosemary Harris, Jan Maxwell, and Reg Rogers. Doug Hughes directs. Previews begin Sept. 15. (Samuel J. Friedman, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

A STEADY RAIN
Hugh Jackman and Daniel Craig star in a new drama by Keith Huff, about Chicago cops whose friendship is tested on the job. John Crowley directs. Previews begin Sept. 10. (Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

TWO UNRELATED PLAYS BY DAVID MAMET
At Atlantic Theatre Company, Neil Pepe directs "Keep Your Pantheon" and "School." In previews. (336 W. 20th St. 212-279-4200.)

NOW PLAYING

BURN THE FLOOR
Harley Medcalf's dance showcase, which has been strutting around the globe for some ten years, has landed on Broadway. Displaying a seemingly endless reserve of sequins and sweaty torsos, the cast, plucked from such exotic locales as Australia, Slovenia, and reality TV, shows off a variety of rumbas, cha-chas, waltzes, and paso dobles. The dancers move well, but they look even better. All in all, the show, directed by Jason Gilkison, is a classier operation than it lets on, despite the occasional cruise-ship element (lounge singers, a disco ball) and a penchant for stage smoke. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

GOD OF CARNAGE
In Christopher Hampton's excellent translation, the French playwright Yasmina Reza's dark and hilarious farce (elegantly directed by Matthew Warchus) has been relocated from Paris to the comfortable upper-middle-class environs of Cobble Hill, Brooklyn. Henry, the aggrieved eleven-year-old son of Michael and Veronica Novak (James Gandolfini and Marcia Gay Harden), has had two teeth knocked out by Benjamin, the son of Alan and Annette Raleigh (Jeff Daniels and Hope Davis). Gandolfini, who brilliantly manages his character's arc from genteel to goniff, earns every moment of Reza's fun, and Davis is an elegant package of repressed nastiness. In ninety minutes of sustained mayhem, Reza wipes the masks of sang-froid off her whole monstrous regiment and demonstrates just how thin a line lies between civility and barbarity. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/30/09.) (Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

HOMER'S ODYSSEY
Handcart Ensemble presents the classic poem by Homer, adapted by the poet Simon Armitage, in a staging that incorporates shadow puppets and acrobats. (Bleecker Street Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. 212-239-6200.)

THE PRIDE OF PARNELL STREET
Fishamble presents a drama by Sebastian Barry, about Dublin street life, directed by Jim Culleton. Part of the "1st Irish" festival. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

SPINNING THE TIMES
M. Burke Walker directs this series of five plays—by Geraldine Aron, Lucy Caldwell, Rosalind Haslett, Rosemary Jenkinson, and Belinda McKeon—which offer an Irish take on recent New York news stories. Origin Theatre Company presents, as part of the "1st Irish" festival. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

Also Playing

AFTER LUKE / WHEN I WAS GOD: Irish Repertory, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. Through Sept. 13. **BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **FUERZA BRUTA: LOOK UP:** Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E. 212-239-6200. **HAIR: THE AMERICAN TRIBAL LOVE-ROCK MUSICAL:** Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **IN THE HEIGHTS:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100. **JERSEY BOYS:** August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200. **THE LION KING:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4747. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-239-6200. **MARY POPPINS:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4747. **NEXT TO NORMAL:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **OUR TOWN:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-868-4444. **ROCK OF AGES:** Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100. **SHREK THE MUSICAL:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200. **SOUTH PACIFIC:** Vivian Beaumont, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200. **THE 39 STEPS:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **THE TOXIC AVENGER:** New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **WEST SIDE STORY:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-239-6200.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Sept. 10: In the early nineteen-sixties, **Tom Rush** was a denizen of the Cambridge coffeehouse Club 47, a center of the burgeoning American folk movement. He was

THE THEATRE • FALL PREVIEW

OLD IS NEW
Jude Law plays the moody Dane in a Donmar Warehouse production of "Hamlet," at the Broadhurst, directed by Michael Grandage (previews begin Sept. 12). ♦ Manhattan Theatre Club revives George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber's "The Royal Family," from 1927, about a dynasty of actors. Ana Gasteyer, Tony Roberts, and Jan Maxwell star; Doug Hughes directs, at the Samuel J. Friedman (Sept. 15). ♦ "After Miss Julie," adapted by Patrick Marber from Strindberg's 1888 play, stars Sienna Miller, at the American Airlines Theatre (Sept. 18).

WINDY CITY ROOTS
Keith Huff's drama "A Steady Rain" stars Hugh Jackman and Daniel Craig as Chicago cops dealing with a tragic crisis; John Crowley directs, at the Schoenfeld (Sept. 10). ♦ Steppenwolf's Tracy Letts follows up his Pulitzer-winning "August: Osage County" with "Superior Donuts," starring Michael McKean as an aging Vietnam draft dodger. Tina Landau directs, at the Music Box (Sept. 16). ♦ The Chicago-based director David Cromer makes his Broadway directing début, with Neil Simon's "Brighton Beach Memoirs" (Oct. 2) and "Broadway Bound" (Nov. 18), in repertory at the Nederlander.

MUSICAL DREAMERS
John Stamos and Gina Gershon light up the new Henry Miller's Theatre in "Bye Bye Birdie" (Sept. 10). ♦ The birth of rock and roll is the subject of "Memphis," by Joe DiPietro (book and lyrics) and David Bryan (music and lyrics), at the Shubert (Sept. 23). ♦ The 1949 Irish fantasy "Finian's Rainbow," starring Jim Norton, Kate Baldwin, and Cheyenne Jackson, comes to the St. James (Oct. 8). ♦ Bill T. Jones directs "Fela!," about the activist Afrobeat pioneer Fela Anikulapo Kuti, at the Eugene O'Neill (Oct. 19).

WOMEN RULE
Carrie Fisher muses on her post-Princess Leia past in "Wishful Drinking," at Studio 54 (Sept. 22). ♦ Nora Ephron and Delia Ephron's "Love, Loss, and What I Wore" will be performed by a rotating cast that includes Samantha Bee, Kristin Chenoweth, and Rosie O'Donnell, at the Westside (Sept. 21). ♦ Theresa Rebeck's comedy "The Understudy," at the Laura Pels, stars Julie White (Oct. 9). ♦ Sarah Ruhl's new play about marriage, "In the Next Room or the Vibrator Play," stars Laura Benanti and Michael Cerveris, at the Lyceum (Oct. 22).

MAMET MANIA
David Mamet's "Oleanna," about student-teacher power politics, stars Bill Pullman and Julia Stiles; Doug Hughes directs, at the Golden (Sept. 29). ♦ Mamet himself directs the world première of his drama "Race," starring James Spader, David Alan Grier, Richard Thomas, and Kerry Washington, at the Barrymore (Nov. 16). ♦ Atlantic Theatre Company presents Mamet's "Keep Your Pantheon" and "School," directed by Neil Pepe (Sept. 9).

OFF THE BOARDS
Other highlights include Kenneth Lonergan's "The Starry Messenger," presented by the New Group, starring Matthew Broderick and Catalina Sandino Moreno, at the Acorn (Oct. 24); Enda Walsh's "The New Electric Ballroom," presented by Dublin's Druid Theatre, at St. Ann's Warehouse (Oct. 27); Richard Foreman's "Idiot Savant," with Willem Dafoe, at the Public (Oct. 27); and Tennessee Williams's "A Streetcar Named Desire," starring Cate Blanchett and directed by Liv Ullmann, at BAM (Nov. 27).

RACHEL DOMM

"LUSCIOUS, DISHY FUN."
– Owen Gleiberman, Entertainment Weekly

"REVEALS THE IMPENETRABLE MYSTIQUE OF ANNA WINTOUR."
– Kim Masters, The Sundance Channel

"JUICY... A GREAT ONE TO WATCH."
– Betsy Sharkey, Los Angeles Times

"COMPLETELY ADDICTIVE."
– Andrew O'Hehir, Salon.com

"REMARKABLE."
– Monita Rajpal, CNN

"IMMENSELY ENJOYABLE."
– Krista Smith, Vanity Fair

"FASHION-LOVING FILM BUFFS WILL RELISH 'THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE.' THE FILM CAPTURES THE UNIQUE PASSION AND DELICATE RELATIONSHIPS THAT MAKE EACH PAGE OF 'VOGUE' A REALITY."
- Meghan Cass, Women's Wear Daily

"FASCINATING."
– Owen Gleiberman, Entertainment Weekly

A FILM BY R.J. CUTLER

THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE

FASHION IS A RELIGION.
THIS IS THE BIBLE.

ANNA WINTOUR & THE MAKING OF VOGUE

A&E INDIE FILMS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH ACTUAL REALITY PICTURES
PRESENTS A FILM BY R.J. CUTLER "THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE" [illegible] BOB RICHMAN
[illegible] CRAIG RICHEY [illegible] MARGARET YEN [illegible] EDDIE O'CONNOR [illegible] AZIN SAMARI
[illegible] MOLLY THOMPSON ROBERT DeBITETTO ROBERT SHARENOW R.J. CUTLER
[illegible] ELIZA HINDMARCH SADIA SHEPARD [illegible] R.J. CUTLER

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IN THEATRES THIS FALL

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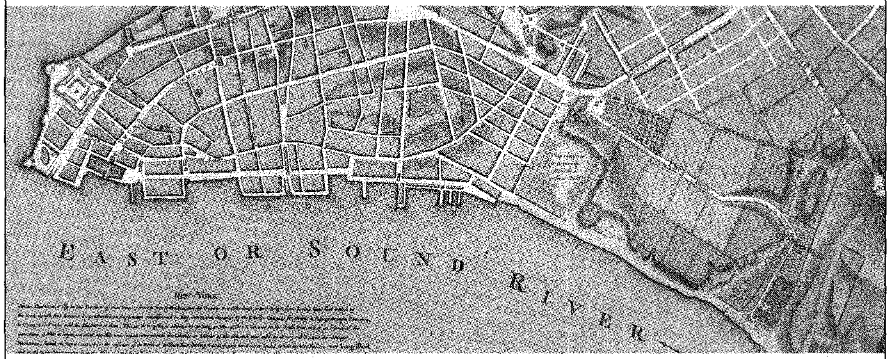
ABOVE AND BEYOND • FALL PREVIEW



FOUR HUNDRED MORE YEARS

Many events this fall celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Henry Hudson, who first sailed up his namesake river in 1609. The New York Public Library's exhibit "Mapping New York's Shoreline, 1609-2009" draws on the more than four hundred thousand maps in the library's Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division. On display are antiquarian maps showing the region's evolution from a pristine rural landscape to a center of urban life. The exhibition doesn't just document the changes that have taken place since Hudson's time, though; it reaches back to the brief visit of Giovanni da Verrazano, in 1558. (Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 917-275-6975. Sept. 25-June 26.)

NEW ISLAND FESTIVAL

Henry Hudson was English, but he came here while working for the Dutch East India Company. The first Dutch settlers in the area initially set up camp on what is now Governors Island, so it's fitting that the New Island Festival, a gathering of Dutch artists in celebration of the quadricentennial, takes place there. More than a hundred and fifty actors, musicians, dancers, visual artists, and performance artists will descend on the island from Sept. 10 to Sept. 20. (For a full schedule, visit www.newislandfestival.com. For other events taking place this week related to the quadricentennial, see Above and Beyond.)

POETS HOUSE

In 1985, the poet Stanley Kunitz and the arts administrator Elizabeth Kray founded Poets House, one of the largest open-access collections of poetry in the United States. The fifty-thousand-volume library and reading room occupied a loft in SoHo until December of 2007, when it closed while the library's new home, in Battery Park City, was under construction. Poets House reopens in its new digs on Sept. 25; the eleven-thousand-square-foot space, which includes an original Calder mobile and a room for children, is twice as large as the SoHo space. On Sept. 26, on the lawn outside the entrance, Billy Collins, Quincy Troupe, Philip Levine, Marie Ponsot, Mark Doty, and others will read from their work. And the singer Natalie Merchant will perform poetry-inspired songs. (10 River Terrace, at Murray St. 212-431-7920.)

READINGS AND TALKS

Sept. 21: The poet Adrienne Rich inaugurates the new season at the 92nd Street Y. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.) ♦ On Sept. 24, the novelist and short-story writer Steven Millhauser makes a rare public appearance, in the company of Annie Proulx. (92nd Street Y.) ♦ Oct. 1: The journalist Anthony Flint discusses his book, "Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City." (Skyscraper Museum, 39 Battery Pl. www.skyscraper.org.) ♦ On Oct. 7, the novelist Alice Sebold kicks off this year's "Selected Shorts" program at Symphony Space with a reading from "The Best American Short Stories 2009," which she edited. (Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400.) ♦ On Nov. 19, at the Morgan Library & Museum, the musician Patti Smith, accompanied by her daughter, Jesse, presents an evening of poetry and music inspired by William Blake, whose watercolors and other works are on display at the library. (Madison Ave. at 36th St. 212-685-0008.)

COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

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an early champion of Joni Mitchell's music, covering three of her songs on his 1968 album, "The Circle Game," including the title track. Even as a young man, he sounded like an old guy, thanks to a rich, resonant baritone and an air of gentle authority. Now he embraces the old-guy role, having parlayed it into viral-video stardom with his performance of Steven Walters's "The Remember Song," a winning and funny ode to forgetfulness. "What I Know" is his first album of new material in more than thirty years.

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Sept. 13: The **Dirty Three**, an instrumental trio that was formed in Australia in the early nineties, perform in only a handful of lucky cities on their current U.S. tour. Led by the violinist Warren Ellis (who doubles as a Bad Seed in Nick Cave's band), the group is complemented by the loose and compelling musicianship of Mick Turner, on guitar, and Jim White, on drums. The band's sets, generally an arc of delicate, pizzicato fluttering that builds toward a searing crescendo, are as vast as the desert surrounding Alice Springs.

CITY WINERY

155 Varick St. (212-608-0555)—Sept. 9: The great guitarist and composer **Bill Frisell** cannot be categorized. His latest album, "Disfarmer," is a collection of gentle instrumental musings inspired by the arresting photographs of a nineteen-thirties Arkansas portraitist. He's just come off two weeks at the Village Vanguard with the free-jazz practitioners Paul Motian and Joe Lovano. This evening finds him with the percussionist Rudy Royston and the multi-instrumentalist Eyvind Kang, and you're likely to hear snatches of Hank Williams, Hawaiian slack guitar, rock and roll, and who knows what else. Sept. 11: **Matthew Sweet**, the slightly under-the-radar power-pop practitioner, and **Susanna Hoffs**, the very visible leader of the Bangles, have teamed up on "Under the Covers Vol. 2," a sequel to their kicky collection of sixties tunes. The material on it moves into the seventies, and the result is entrancing. Great record-makers know great records, and the new versions of the songs of Mott the Hoople, the Grateful Dead, Rod Stewart, George Harrison, and others honor the originals and resonate with newfound enthusiasm.

HIGHLINE BALLROOM

431 W. 16th St. (212-414-5994)—Sept. 9: In 1986, the **BoDeans**, led by Kurt Neumann and Sam Llanas, two guitar-playing, vocally compatible pals from Waukesha, Wisconsin, teamed up with the producer T-Bone Burnett and released a terrific début album of country-rock-tinged garage pop called "Love & Hope & Sex & Dreams." They haven't made a splash that big since, but they haven't quit trying. Their latest album is "Still." Sept. 11: Gruff Rhys, Huw Bunford, Guto Pryce, Cian Ciárán, and Dafydd Ieuan formed **Super Furry Animals** in, where else, Cardiff, Wales, in the early nineties. With the recent release of "Dark Days/Light Years," they continue to fuse pop melodies, sprawling arrangements, and electronic innovations within a heady psychedelic framework. Sept. 12: **Hugh Cornwell** was a founding member and the longtime lead guitarist of the Stranglers, who came out of the British punk movement in the late seventies. But his roots were in the blues, and his seven solo albums since leaving the band, in the early nineties, have been tight, tough, guitar-driven affairs. His latest is "Hooverdam." Sept. 15: **Loudon Wainwright III** gathers the clan (including **Rufus** and **Martha Wainwright** and the **Roches**) to present music from his latest album, "High Wide & Handsome: The Charlie Poole Project." Poole was a singer and a banjo player, and his trio, the North Carolina Ramblers, recorded some of the biggest hits of the nineteen-twenties. Wainwright's album features material from the Poole catalogue and new songs inspired by it.

IZOD CENTER

The Meadowlands, New Jersey (800-745-3000)—Sept. 12: Reclaiming Southern rock from the hoary likes of Molly Hatchet et al., Nashville's **Kings of Leon** emerged at the start of the decade with a hard-driving, hook-laden début, "Youth & Young Manhood." It garnered the band comparisons to New York's then darling garage rockers the Strokes, but, unlike their northern neighbors, the Kings moved beyond the simple style of their first album. They've since embraced elements as diverse as country and post-punk, and are now an endearingly multifaceted and adventurous ensemble.

JOE'S PUB

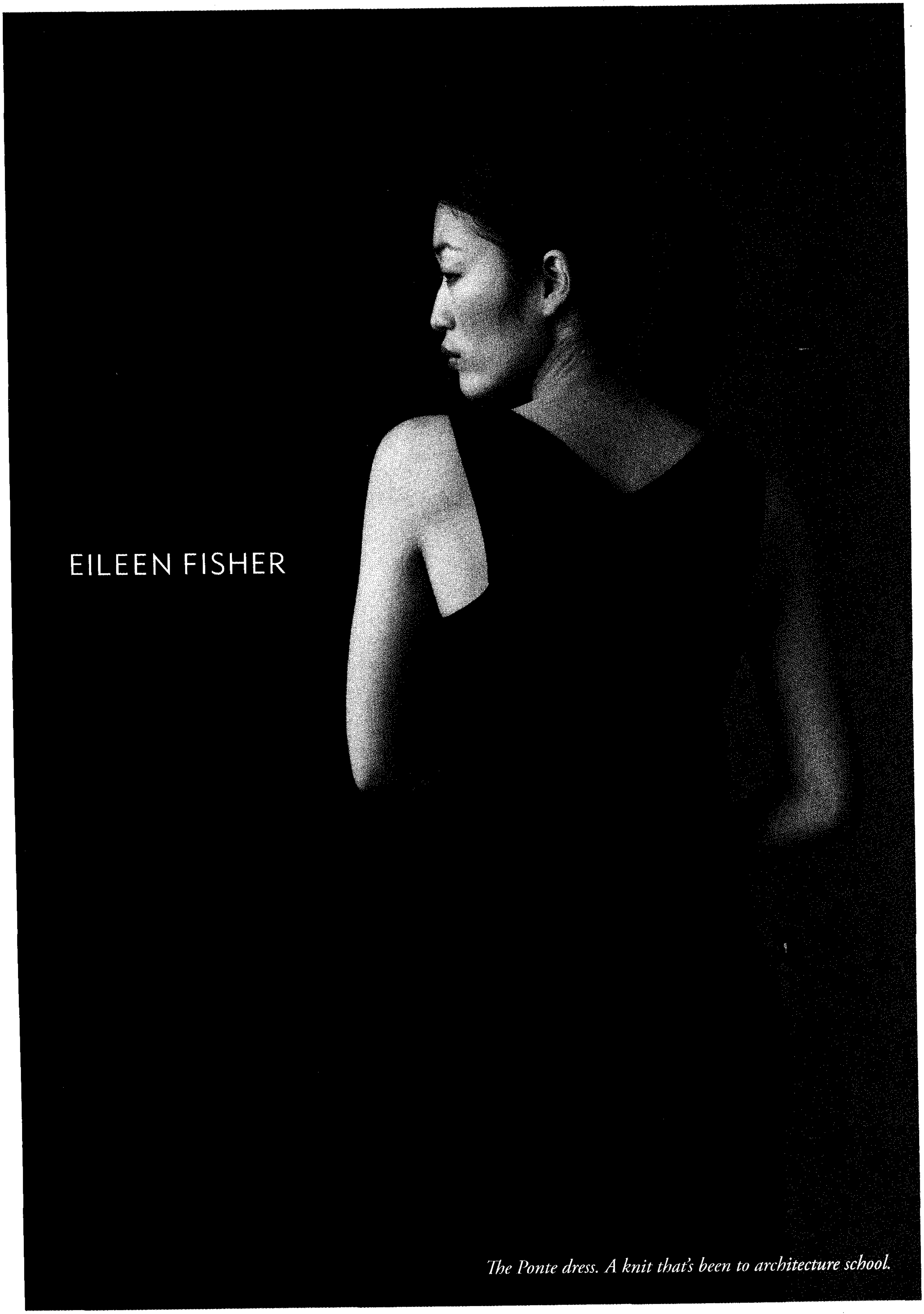
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—**Jeffery Self** and **Cole Escola** became the twink answer to Abbott and Costello when their mischievously funny YouTube videos made them downtown micro-stars. On Sept. 11 and Sept. 18, they perform a live offshoot of their Logo series, "Jeffery and Cole Casserole."

KNITTING FACTORY

361 Metropolitan Ave., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (347-529-6696)—The fabled Manhattan music venue has taken over the former Luna Lounge space. Sept. 9: **Les Savy Fav**, famous for post-hardcore noisiness and the front man Tim Harrington's unpredictable antics. Special guests include the comedian **Hannibal Buress**. Sept. 12: Few spaces are big enough to contain marching bands, especially the circus and punk varieties, but the new Knitting Factory will make room. Chicago's **Mucca Pazza**, Italian for "mad cow," boasts nearly thirty performers—costumed and choreographed mismatched mavericks playing a full range of horns, accordions, glockenspiels, and drums, and even a few cheerleaders. Headed by the bandleader Mark Messing, the freaks (as they call themselves) perform a diverse program that includes sixties television theme songs, Bartók opuses, and Stevie Wonder R. & B. classics. The arrangements, which are surprisingly meticulous, are sure to get the crowd swinging. With Boston's carnivalesque genre-bending ensemble **Beat Circus** and the rustic spellbinder **Larkin Grimm**.

MILLER THEATRE

Broadway at 116th St. (212-854-7799)—Sept. 9-12: The "Wordless Music" series, which showcases commonalities and continuities between instrumental music of disparate genres, returns to the spacious Miller Theatre. The first night features the 802 Tour, a travelling group of Vermont transplants, featuring **Doveman**, **Sam Amidon**, and **Nico Muhly**. The following evening, it presents two Charles Spearin projects, **Do Make Say Think** and the **Happiness Project**. Sept. 11 features the ambient electronic music of **Tim Hecker**, with **Grouper** and **Julianna Barwick** supporting. Sept. 12 marks the final night at the Miller, with **Destroyer** and **Loscil** performing a collaborative set of each other's music. With the **JACK Quartet**.


EILEEN FISHER
The Ponte dress. A knit that's been to architecture school.

MUSIC HALL OF WILLIAMSBURG
66 N. 6th St., Brooklyn (718-486-5400)—Sept. 12: The recently reunited Chicago punk band **Naked Raygun** returns for the first time in more than fifteen years. The band, which formed in 1980 and broke up in the early nineties, mixes melodic outbursts with edgy, feedback-driven guitar. Like their fellow-Midwesterners Hüsker Dü, they have the capacity to make rage uplifting and sonically pleasing.

NEW YORK GYPSY FESTIVAL
This annual gathering, now in its fifth year, begins on Sept. 11 with an inspired double bill featuring two local groups, the traditionally minded twelve-piece Balkan brass band **Zlatne Uste** (Golden Lips) and the much smaller **Luminescent Orchestrii**, a quartet of two violins, a guitar, and an upright bass which specializes in a raw, cabaret-tinged take on the Roma sound. (Hungarian House, 231 E. 82nd St.) The following night, the **Sway Machinery**, which features veterans of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, the Arcade Fire, and Antibalas, performs aboard the tall ship Clipper City. (For more information, visit www.nygypsyfest.com. Through Sept. 26.)

(LE) POISSON ROUGE
158 Bleecker St. (212-505-3474)—Sept. 11: With a knack for effortlessly catchy hooks, New Jersey's **Naughty by Nature** deftly merged East Coast hip-hop swagger with pop accessibility, bringing gritty street lingo into the mainstream lexicon in the early nineties. The hits may have dried up, but Naughty by Nature is still at it, and is currently working on a new album. Sept. 11: The electric-guitar pioneer **Glenn Branca** presents works from a forthcoming album called "The Ascension: The Sequel," the follow-up to a seminal record he released in 1981. Branca, who moved to New York from Boston in the mid-seventies, developed his compositional voice among the angular No Wave bands of downtown Manhattan. While he's known for his expansive electric-guitar configurations (his Thirteenth Symphony is written for a hundred guitars) and for his influence on bands such as Sonic Youth and Swans, his own unique sound, related to minimalism and full of intense repetition, drones, and sometimes fury, has lately been garnering increasing, and deserved, recognition in both the classical and the rock worlds. For this performance, he'll conduct an ensemble of four guitars, bass, and drums, and screen excerpts from "135 Grand St., 1979," a film about the No Wave era that includes the only known footage of several groundbreaking groups of the time. Sept. 15: **Deerhoof** is an eclectic San Francisco band that trades in pop whimsy and bold cacophony. While the band's music is prone to flights of meandering melody, it never strays too far, tethered as it is to the lilting strains of the Japanese vocalist Satomi Matsuzaki. The group's experimental music never spirals into self-indulgence, and its most recent effort, "Offend Maggie," finds the band at its most accessible.

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—Sept. 13: The **Feelies.** Fresh from their scheduled appearance at this year's "All Tomorrow's Parties" festival, in upstate New York, the storied post-punk ensemble from Haledon, New Jersey, comes to Brooklyn. The band's watershed début album from 1980, "Crazy Rhythms," and its follow-up, "The Good Earth" (1986), have just been reissued. Sept. 15: The **Zeros.** Though they did not become as famous as their peers in X or Black Flag, this Los Angeles punk band (also known as the Mexican Ramones) played an equally seismic role in putting that city on the punk-rock map in the late seventies. With **Jemina Pearl**, formerly of Be Your Own Pet, whose solo début record, "Break It Up," includes a duet with Iggy Pop.

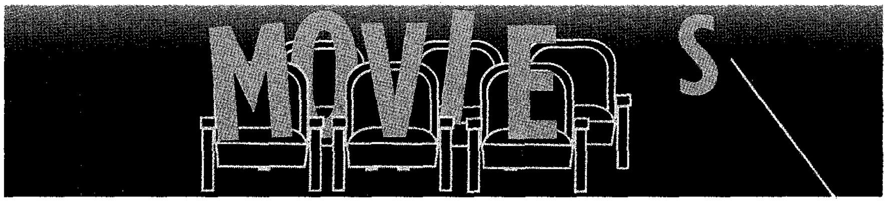
ST. MARK'S IN-THE-BOWERY
Second Ave. at 10th St.—Sept. 12: The Brooklyn-based piano man and pop-rocker **Danny Ross**, backed by a fifteen-piece band, celebrates the release of his début album, "One Way." (For information about tickets, visit www.dannyrossmusic.com.)

TERMINAL 5
610 W. 56th St. (212-582-6600)—On July 7, 2007, at 7 P.M., the legendary Osaka noise-rock visionaries the **Boredoms** played, for free, a seventy-seven-minute piece with seventy-seven drummers arranged in a spiral in Brooklyn Bridge Park, as the first installment of their Boadrum series. Last August (8/8/08—get it?), they split the event between New York and Los Angeles, with eighty-eight drummers in each venue, again for free. This kind of annual expansion is clearly unsustainable. This time around, on Sept. 9, they've downsized the event to nine percussionists. Nevertheless, the experience will likely be as transcendent and memorable as the previous events. Sept. 11: The **Cult** are touring in tribute to their breakout 1985 album, "Love," a release that caught the band in the midst of its transformation from psychedelic gothic boffins into leather-clad rockers. The record contains catchy anthems like "Rain" and their signature single, "She Sells Sanctuary." Although the Cult eventually lost the finesse, rococo flourish, and stately restraint demonstrated on this album, those qualities explain why it remains a fan favorite.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Starting Sept. 9: The Oak Room, a local bastion of old-school panache, celebrates its thirtieth anniversary by presenting another cultural survivor, **Jack Jones.** The

STEVE POWERS



DVD NOTES
AUTUMN HARVEST

On the seventieth anniversary of the theatrical release of two all-time classics, Warner Home Video is releasing sumptuous new editions of "Gone with the Wind" (Nov. 17)—a five-disk package—and "The Wizard of Oz" (Sept. 29), both directed (mainly) by Victor Fleming. Classic Hollywood is also represented in "The Claudette Colbert Collection" (Nov. 3), from Universal, which features six films, including "Bluebeard's Eighth Wife," directed by Ernst Lubitsch and co-starring Gary Cooper. One of the rarest and greatest films that Douglas Sirk directed, "Summer Storm"—a 1944 adaptation of Chekhov's "The Shooting Party," starring George Sanders, Linda Darnell, and Edward Everett Horton—will be released by VCI Entertainment (Oct. 20). "Paul Newman: The Tribute Collection" (Sept. 22), a seventeen-disk set from Twentieth Century Fox, includes Otto Preminger's epic "Exodus," Robert Rossen's "The Hustler," and Robert Altman's "Buffalo Bill and the Indians."

It's a good season for documentaries. "Anvil! The Story of Anvil" (Oct. 6) captures the return of the metal-rockers Robb Reiner and Steve (Lips) Kudlow. In Maximilian Schell's modern classic "Marlene" (Oct. 6), from 1984, the actress lends her voice to the story of her life but wrangles with the director over appearing on-camera. "Food, Inc." (Nov. 3), directed by Robert Kenner, features Eric Schlosser and Michael Pollan on unsavory aspects of the American diet. Icarus Films is bringing out "The Ister" (Nov. 3), David Barison and Daniel Ross's meditation on the contemporary relevance of Martin Heidegger, featuring the philosophers Bernard Stiegler, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and the filmmaker Hans-Jürgen Syberberg. Kino International offers a pair of ironic compilations: "How to Be a Man" and "How to Be a Woman" (Oct. 6), comprising educational films made between 1948 and 1982, culled from the archives of the A/V Geeks Film Library.

Action is, as always, in the pipeline. Quentin Tarantino wrote the story for Oliver Stone's 1992 action freakout, "Natural Born Killers" (Oct. 13), starring Woody Harrelson and Juliette Lewis as a pair of telegenic psychopaths; it will be released, in a two-hundred-and-five-minute director's cut, by Warner Home Video. Sam Raimi's "Drag Me to Hell" (Oct. 20), from Universal, stars Alison Lohman as a loan officer on the ultimate bad trip and Justin Long as the boyfriend who tries to see her through it.

Independent filmmaking is worthily represented, too. The newcomer Factory 25 will release "Frownland" (Sept. 29), Ronald Bronstein's harrowing yet exhilarating portrait of an aphasic outsider (Dore Mann). "The Exiles" (Nov. 17), the searingly insightful, brilliantly photographed drama that Kent Mackenzie shot from 1958 to 1960 in a Native American neighborhood in Los Angeles, was first brought out for theatrical distribution in 2008 by Milestone, which is also doing the home-video release, in conjunction with Oscilloscope Laboratories.

The flow of foreign films, classic and new, has slowed this fall. The recent demise of New Yorker Films, one of the key sources of new international releases, is in part responsible for the slowdown, as is the changing home-video market. Criterion, in a new partnership with IFC Films, will release Arnaud Desplechin's 2008 feature, "A Christmas Tale" (Nov. 10), with a teeming cast (including Catherine Deneuve, her real-life daughter, Chiara Mastroianni, and Mathieu Amalric) in a story of conflicts at a family reunion. (Desplechin's documentary "L'Aimée," about the sale of his family's longtime home, is included.) Luis Buñuel's 1956 melodrama "Death in the Garden" (Oct. 27), starring Simone Signoret, is being brought out by Microcinema. "Private Century" (Sept. 22), Jan Sikl's eight-part collage of life in Czechoslovakia as seen in home movies and other personal documents, will be released by Facets. The increasing availability of recent releases through video on demand as well as via streaming video (as at www.theauteurs.com and Amazon) indicates that the home-video business is at a crossroads, and that the challenge is particularly great for art-house distributors.

—Richard Brody

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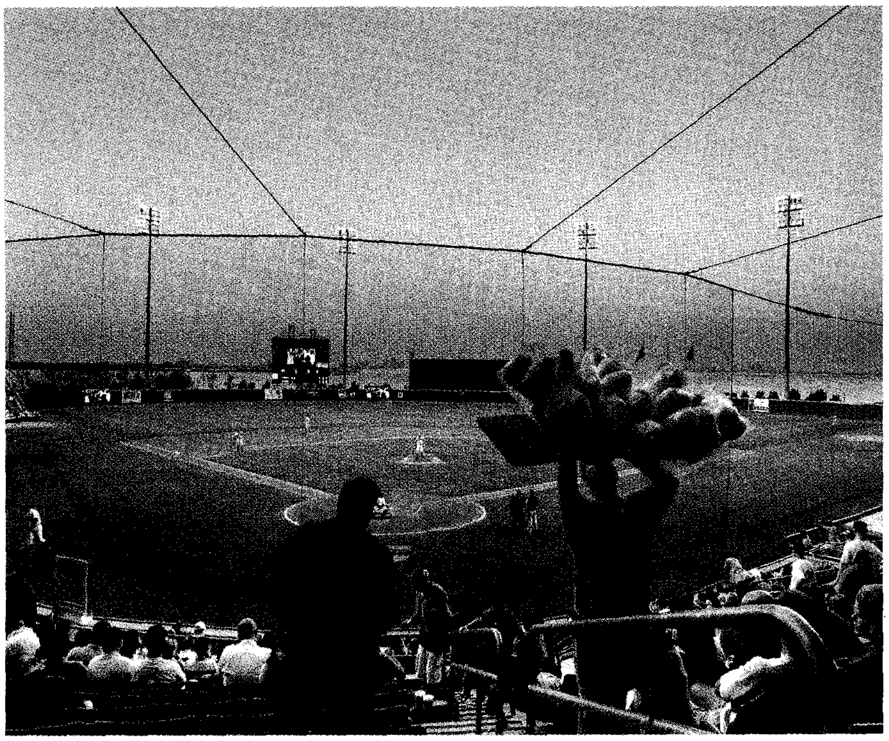

A photograph of Richmond County Bank Ballpark, by Len Jenshel, in "The Edge of New York: Waterfront Photographs," at the Museum of the City of New York.

singer, who is seventy-one, wrings beauty from standards with a confident elegance that only experience can impart.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Sept. 8-13: The **Overtone Quartet,** an authentic jazz supergroup, features the bassist **Dave Holland,** the saxophonist **Chris Potter,** the pianist **Jason Moran,** and the drummer **Eric Harland.**

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Sept. 8-13: The pianist **Renee Rosnes's** quartet, which includes the saxophonist **Steve Wilson,** the bassist **Peter Washington,** and the drummer **Lewis Nash,** has, with time, coalesced into a sharp and stylish mainstream unit.

FEINSTEIN'S AT LOEWS REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Sept. 8-12: **Michael Feinstein** and **Christine Ebersole,** cabaret royalty, join for an evening of familiar standards and some rarities.

"HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ"
Sept. 10: The fall season begins with an evening of cabaret songs, featuring **Barbara Carroll** and **Paula West.** (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 212-220-1460.)

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Sept. 10-13: **Nicholas Payton** is a member of a continually evolving, fecund generation of trumpeters that includes Roy Hargrove and Marcus Printup. Having delved into everything from traditional New Orleans jazz to neo-R. & B., Payton is a hard-blowing crowd-pleaser.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Sept. 10-13: The pianist **Eldar** and his responsive trio celebrate a new album, "Virtue."

SMALLS
183 W. 10th St. (212-252-5091)—Sept. 10: The pianist **Ehud Asherie** performs duets with the trumpeter **Stjepko Gut.** Later that night, the guitarist **Howard Alden** and his trio are followed by the saxophonist **Ned Goold** and his trio.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Sept. 8-13: **Kenny Barron,** the dean of mainstream jazz piano, keeps his bands stocked with fresh faces; here the group includes the trumpeter **Brandon Lee** and the saxophonist **Dayna Stephens.**

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"Vermeer's Masterpiece 'The Milkmaid.'"** Opens Sept. 10. ♦ **"Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul."** Through Sept. 20. ♦ **"Augustus Saint-Gaudens in the Metropolitan Museum of Art."** Through Nov. 15. ♦ **"Silk and Bamboo: Music and Art of China."** Through Feb. 7. ♦ **"Peaceful Conquerors: Jain Manuscript Painting."** Opens Sept. 10. ♦ **"Roxy Paine on the Roof: Maelstrom."** Through Oct. 25. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Monet's Water Lilies."** Opens Sept. 13. ♦ **"James Ensor."** Through Sept. 21. ♦ **"In & Out of Amsterdam: Travels in Conceptual Art, 1960-1976."** Through Oct. 5. ♦ **"Ron Arad: No Discipline."** Through Oct. 19. ♦ **"Compass in Hand: Selections from the Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection."** Through Jan. 4. ♦ **"The Erotic Object: Surrealist Sculpture from the Collection."** Through Jan. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Thannhauser Collection."** Ongoing. ♦ **"Kandinsky Gallery."** Ongoing. (Open Fridays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Saturday evenings until 7:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3600)—**"Dan Graham: Beyond."** Through Oct. 11. ♦ **"Photoconceptualism, 1966-1973."** Through Sept. 20. ♦ **"Sadie Benning: Play Pause."** Through Sept. 20. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Yinka Shonibare MBE."** Through Sept. 20. ♦ **"Patricia Cronin: Harriet Hosmer, Lost and Found."** Through Jan. 24. ♦ **"Reflections in the Electric Mirror: New Feminist Video."** Through Jan. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Extreme Mammals: The Biggest, Smallest, and Most Amazing Mammals of All Time."** Through Jan. 3. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM
45 W. 53rd St. (212-265-1040)—**"Kaleidoscope Quilts: The Art of Paula Nadelstern."** Through Sept. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 7:30.)

ASIA SOCIETY
Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-288-6400)—**"Hanging Fire: Contemporary Art from Pakistan."** Opens Sept. 10. ♦ **"Yang Fudong: Seven Intellectuals in a Bamboo Forest."** Through Sept. 13. ♦ **"Sight Unseen: Video from Afghanistan and Iran."** Through Sept. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS
1040 Grand Concourse (718-681-6000)—**"Intersections: The Grand Concourse Commissions."** Through Jan. 4. ♦ **"Living and Dreaming: The 29th 'Artists in the Marketplace' Exhibition."** Through Sept. 13. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GREY ART GALLERY
100 Washington Sq. E. (212-998-6780)—**"Icons of the Desert: Early Aboriginal Paintings from Papunya."** Through Dec. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 6, Saturdays, 11 to 5, and Wednesday evenings until 8.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000)—**"Avedon Fashion 1944-2000."** Through Sept. 20. ♦ **"David Seidner: Paris Fashions, 1945."** Through Sept. 20. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Reinventing Ritual: Contemporary Art and Design for Jewish Life."** Opens Sept. 13. ♦ **"Rite Now: Sacred and Secular in Video."** Opens Sept. 13. ♦ **"They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust."** Through Oct. 1. (Open Thursdays, and Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 5:45, and Fridays, 11 to 4.)

MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM
225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0008)—**"Pages of Gold: Medieval Illuminations from the Morgan."** Through Sept. 15. ♦ **"William Blake's World: 'A New Heaven Is Begun.'"** Opens Sept. 11. ♦ **"Celebrating Puccini."** Opens Sept. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. (212-534-1672)—**"The Edge of New York: Waterfront Photographs."** Through Nov. 29. ♦ **"Dutch Seen: New York Rediscovered."** Through Sept. 13. ♦ **"Manhatta / Manhattan."** Through Oct. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"Focus: Oskar Kokoschka."** Through Oct. 5. ♦ **"Selections from the Permanent Collection."** Through Oct. 5. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM
235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222)—**"Emory Douglas: Black Panther."** Through Oct. 18. ♦ **"Intersections Intersected: The Photography of David Goldblatt."** Through Oct. 11. ♦ **"Rigo 23: The Deeper They Bury Me, the Louder My Voice Becomes."** Through Oct. 21. ♦ **"Dorothy Iannone: Lioness."** Through Oct. 18. (Open Wednesdays and weekends, noon to 6, and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 10.)

QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART
Flushing Meadows-Corona Park (718-592-9700)—**"Tarjama / Translation."** Through Sept. 27. ♦ **"Launch Pad: Johanna Unzueta."** Through Sept. 27. ♦ **"Red Lines Housing Crisis Learning Center."** Through Sept. 27. ♦ **"Work in Progress: Dorothea Rockburne's Homage to Colin Powell."** Through Sept. 16. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

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RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—**"Mandala: The Perfect Circle."** In the Tantric Buddhist canon, a mandala is a secret. Whether it's a square inside a circle, a circle in a square, or concentric rings, the symmetrical diagrams symbolize the mysteries of the cosmos and are intended for use during meditation—like spiritual training wheels. The early versions in this show, vibrant paintings on cloth that date from the seventh century to the ninth century, are in surprisingly good condition. But their simple rows of deities lack the dazzling pictorial intricacy of the labyrinthine marvels that follow here. The exhibition brings the tantra into the twenty-first century, via computer animations that guide viewers through palace architecture, as visualized during meditation. Through Jan. 11. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, 11 to 5, Wednesdays, 11 to 7, Fridays, 11 to 10, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

SCULPTURECENTER
44-19 Purves St., Long Island City (718-361-1750)—**"A Voyage of Growth and Discovery: Mike Kelley and Michael Smith."** Opens Sept. 13. ♦ **"In Practice Fall 2009."** Opens Sept. 13. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"Hurvin Anderson."** Through Oct. 25. ♦ **"Artists in Residence: Khalif Kelly, Adam Pendleton, Dawit L. Petros."** Through Oct. 25. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

ALLEN FRAME
Frame's big, handsome color photographs of friends and lovers are not unlike the black-and-white images he's shown previously; they're subtle, intimate, and often quite dark, with a painterly feel for the chiaroscuro effects of shadow and light. But color, nearly always burnished by the sun, adds warmth to the work and draws us deeper into the circumscribed spaces he uses to frame his subjects. Most of them are alone in a dimly lit room, sometimes no more than silhouettes before a window, and even when they're outdoors they appear delineated by landscape or architecture, in a style that recalls David Hockney. Frame also shares Hockney's sense of casual refinement, but he adds a bright spark of erotic possibility to temper the darkness. Opens Sept. 10. (Gitterman, 170 E. 75th St. 212-734-0868.)

Short List

MILTON AVERY: DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-247-2111. Opens Sept. 9. **CAROL BOVE:** Horticultural Society of New York, 148 W. 37th St. 212-757-0915. Through Sept. 10. **TIM DAVIS:** Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-445-0444. Opens Sept. 10. **JACQUES HENRI LARTIGUE:** Howard Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010. Opens Sept. 10. **SOL LEWITT:** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292. Through Oct. 17. **A. R. PENCK:** Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 212-988-1623. Opens Sept. 10. **JACK TWORKOV:** UBS Art Gallery, 1285 Sixth Ave., at 51st St. 212-713-2885. Through Oct. 27. **"SILENT PICTURES":** James Gallery, CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave., at 34th St. 212-817-7138. Through Oct. 11.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

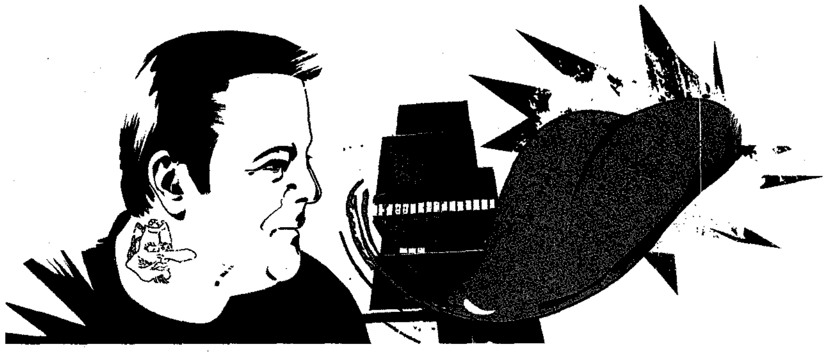
TRACEY BARAN
Like many young photographers, Baran, who died late last year, at the age of thirty-three, took pictures of her family, her boyfriends, and herself. But her work never feels narcissistic or self-indulgent; in spite of its obvious staging, it feels real, even revelatory, especially where sex is concerned. Most of the color photographs in this posthumous retrospective are large, though several smaller work prints of material intended for an earlier show are included. All are sharply observed and shrewdly composed, but, whether she was photographing her father slumped in a bathtub or her boyfriend sprawled nude on a mossy rock, Baran always got right to the emotional core of a picture while maintaining a lively sense of humor. Opens Sept. 12. (Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-255-8450.)

JED FIELDING
Fielding's photographs of the blind children he met at schools in Mexico City are not in the tradition of photojournalistic muckraking. Like his terrific earlier series from the streets of Naples, these images are vivacious, audacious, and in your face. His subjects are not pitiable victims; they're rambunctious, apparently happy kids at play, responding to Fielding's attention with curiosity and delight. They may be cut off from the visual world, but they relish physical contact, both with one another and with the patient photographer. The best of the work was made at close range, where that connection was most tangible, and young faces fill the frames with fragile, vivid life. Opens Sept. 10. (Meislin, 526 W. 26th St. 212-627-2552.)

DAN GRAHAM
When it comes to site-specific art, the page is as important to Graham as any location. This comprehensive exhibition of his printed matter is a companion to the Whitney's current retrospective, covering forty years of material, from "End Moments," Graham's first artist's book, made in 1969 (and recently reissued), to his latest collection of essays, "Rock/Music Writings." In addition to well-worn Grahamiana (projects for *Artforum* and *Arts Magazine*), the show includes a reprint of the September 1, 1969, edition of *The New York Review of Sex & Politics*, with an ad, placed by Graham, in his artist-poet's guise, seeking a professional medical writer to come up with a clinical description of "human male sexual detumescence." Through Sept. 18. (Specific Object, 601 W. 26th St. 212-242-6453.)

PETER HUJAR
Hujar, who died in 1987, at the age of fifty-three, was in his early twenties when he made these small black-and-white prints, and they represent his first serious foray into photography. Few of them have been exhibited or reproduced before, and although a number are rather atypical, others are full of the tender intensity and empathy that characterized the artist's best later work. Included are pictures from Italy, Key West, and Southbury, Connecticut, where he photographed children in a home for the developmentally disabled. Hujar's images of children—also the subject of many of his Italian photographs—are especially soulful and unnerving; when they exchange

ART • FALL PREVIEW



ULLA PUGGAARD

TAKEOVER ARTIST
In 2007, Urs Fischer made one of the most audacious site-specific works that New York had ever seen when he took a jackhammer to the concrete floor of Gavin Brown's Enterprise, transforming the gallery into a gaping chasm of dirt and debris—an anti-monument to awe. The New Museum gives the Swiss artist the run of the main galleries in its Bowery building for a show combining discrete objects—a labyrinth of chromed steel cubes silk-screened with photographs, a motion-sensitive tongue tucked into a hole in the wall, which sticks out to lick passersby—with installations conceived just for the space. Opens Oct. 28.

DRIVEN TO ABSTRACTION
Georgia O'Keeffe is well loved as a painter of carnal flowers and New Mexican landscapes, but her abstractions remain largely unknown. The Whitney rectifies that in the first survey of the artist's lifelong engagement with pure color and form. Opens Sept. 17. ♦ Solomon R. Guggenheim had a passion for the paintings of Wassily Kandinsky—he owned more than a hundred and fifty. The Guggenheim Museum, which turns fifty this year, has organized a major retrospective of the Russian modernist's work, the first in two decades. Opens Sept. 18. ♦ There's a new New York School—a loosely affiliated group of painters who temper their formal concerns with conceptual chutzpah. "Besides, With, Against, and Yet: Abstraction and the Readymade Gesture," at the Kitchen, identifies the tendency in the work of some two dozen local artists. Opens Nov. 13.

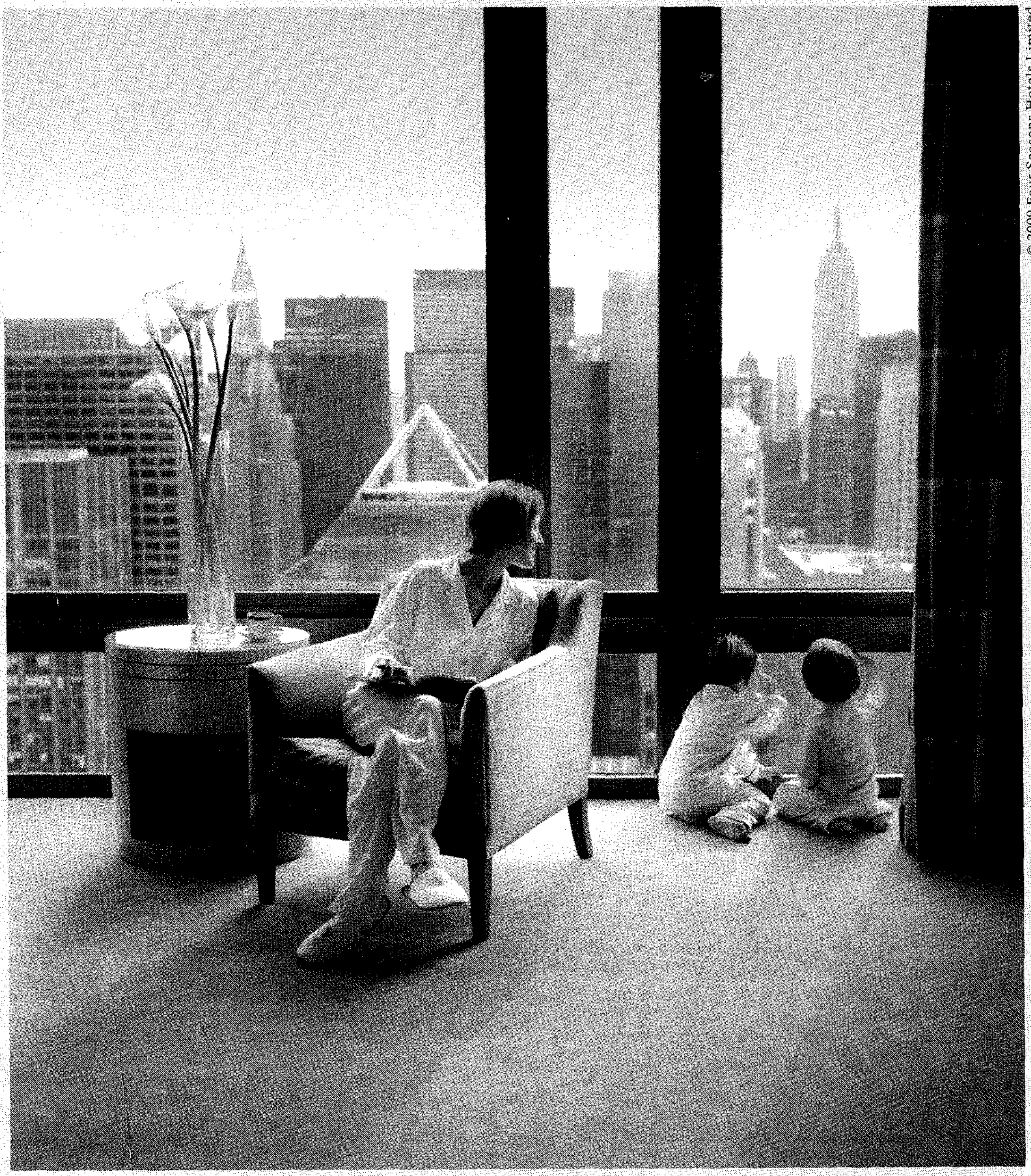
CAMERA, ACTION
When the Swiss photographer Robert Frank travelled cross-country in the mid-nineteen-fifties, he "sucked a sad poem right out of America onto film," as Jack Kerouac wrote in the introduction to Frank's groundbreaking book, "The Americans." The Met exhibits all eighty-three pictures from the original volume—the first time they have been shown together in New York—alongside contact sheets, manuscripts, and other books by the artist. Opens Sept. 22. ♦ In the decades since Frank found his muse on the road, photographers have increasingly taken their inspiration from the studio and the darkroom—a return to the avant-garde strategies of László Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray, updated for the digital age. "New Photography 2009: Walead Beshty, Daniel Gordon, Leslie Hewitt, Carter Mull, Sterling Ruby, Sara VanDerBeek," at MOMA, examines the practice. Opens Sept. 30.

RAISE HIGH THE ROOFBEAMS
The Museum of Chinese in America inaugurates its new Maya Lin-designed space—surrounding a skylit courtyard—at the border of Chinatown and SoHo, with the exhibition "Here and Now: Chinese Artists in New York," on Sept. 22. ♦ El Museo del Barrio has revamped its building on Fifth Avenue, adding a glass façade and renovating the galleries. "Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis" opens Oct. 17.

MARQUIS NAME
Paul Chan's digital projection "Sade for Sade's Sake," a nearly six-hour-long shadow play of polymorphous perversity, was one of the most talked-about works at this year's Venice Biennale. It makes its New York début at the Greene Naftali gallery, in Chelsea, on Oct. 22.

YEARS FLY.

MOMENTS LAST FOREVER.



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DANCE • FALL PREVIEW

PATRICK LEGER

THE NEWS FROM OZ
The Australian choreographer Lucy Guerin, a leading light Down Under, has two engagements this fall: "Corridor," at Baryshnikov Arts Center (Sept. 16-20), which hems in its dancers with impossible instructions, and "Structure and Sadness," at Dance Theatre Workshop (Oct. 1-3), which is based on the historical collapse of a Melbourne bridge.

DANCE FOR ALL
The "Fall for Dance" festival, at City Center, showcases twenty companies in ten days at only ten dollars a pop (Sept. 22-Oct. 3). This year, there's a theme: the Ballets Russes. On the schedule are Basil Twist's wondrous puppet production of "Petrushka"; Ballet West's reconstruction of "Les Biches," a sophisticated comedy of manners by Nijinska; and Ohad Naharin's earthy take on Ravel's "Bolero," performed by his Tel Aviv-based Batsheva Dance Company. Other participants are the Paul Taylor Dance Company, Morphoses/The Wheeldon Company, and the Mark Morris Dance Group.

POST-POSTMODERN MOVEMENTS
"Dance," the Judson Dance Theatre veteran Lucinda Childs's 1979 landmark in minimalism, with its Philip Glass score and dancer-doubling Sol LeWitt film, comes to the Joyce (Oct. 6-11). ♦ The wily postmodern veteran David Gordon takes on Brecht's "The Roundheads and the Pointheads" cabaret style, in "Uncivil Wars," at Montclair State University (Nov. 5-8). The casting alone tantalizes: John Kelly as the Mother Superior, Valda Setterfield as Brecht. ♦ Each new dance by the fiercely intelligent and admirably anti-mimetic Tere O'Connor is a peek into an ongoing choreographic process. His latest, at Dance Theatre Workshop (Nov. 10-14), plays with calculation and chance, complex systems and spontaneous choice. ♦ Two sixties icons, Deborah Hay and Yvonne Rainer, share a double bill at Baryshnikov Arts Center (Nov. 17-18). Hay gives dancers license to remix her ideas; Rainer makes her own goulash of cultural references—Sarah Bernhardt, Steve Martin, soccer moves, old Yvonne Rainer dances.

POINTE WORK
The Washington-based Suzanne Farrell Ballet, led by one of Balanchine's greatest muses, comes to Princeton's McCarter Center on Oct. 4, to present a pas de deux from Balanchine's rarely performed "Clarinade," a jazzy number from 1964, in a program that also includes "Agon" and excerpts from "Divertimento No. 15" and Béjart's "Romeo and Juliet." ♦ Short but sweet, American Ballet Theatre's fall season (at Avery Fisher Hall, Oct. 7-10) will reap the benefits of the company's acquisition of the eminently gifted Russian choreographer Alexei Ratmansky, who brings a new ballet set to Scarlatti keyboard sonatas. ♦ Christopher Wheeldon returns to City Center (Oct. 29-Nov. 1) with his stellar collective, Morphoses. The two alternating programs include a new Wheeldon piece set to Rachmaninoff piano suites and a première by the Australian choreographer Tim Harbour. ♦ Karole Armitage, fresh from her latest Broadway stint (she choreographed "Hair"), brings her troupe to BAM (Nov. 4-7). Armitage Gone! Dance will perform "Itutu," her slithering, whirling exploration of West African electronica, inspired by the live polyrhythms of Lukas Ligeti and the Burkina Electric.

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looks, there's a profound sense of recognition and understanding. Opens Sept. 10. (Marks, 526 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200.)

Short List

JANINE ANTONI: Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100. Opens Sept. 12. **MARK BRADFORD / KARA WALKER:** Sikkema Jenkins, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262. Opens Sept. 10. **TROY BRAUNTUCH:** Petzel, 537 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9467. Opens Sept. 10. **TOM BURR:** Bortolami, 510 W. 25th St. 212-727-2050. Opens Sept. 10. **RAOUL DE KEYSER:** Zwirner, 533 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070. Opens Sept. 10. **JASON DODGE:** Kaplan, 525 W. 21st St. 212-645-7335. Opens Sept. 10. **ORLY GENGER:** Goldston, 530 W. 25th St. 212-206-7887. Opens Sept. 10. **JOANNE GREENBAUM:** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-352-9460. Opens Sept. 10. **SIMEN JOHAN:** Milo, 525 W. 25th St. 212-414-0370. Opens Sept. 10. **MAYA LIN:** Pace Wildenstein, 545 W. 22nd St. 212-989-4258. Opens Sept. 10. **JILL MAGID:** Lambert, 550 W. 21st St. 212-242-3611. Opens Sept. 12. **JOSIAH MCELHENY:** Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 212-627-6000. Opens Sept. 12. **CHRIS OFILI:** David Zwirner, 525 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070. Opens Sept. 10. **ALESSANDRO PESSOLI:** Kern, 532 W. 20th St. 212-367-9663. Opens Sept. 10. **MAGNUS PLESSEN:** Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 212-206-9300. Opens Sept. 10. **DASHA SHISHKIN:** Feuer, 530 W. 24th St. 212-989-7700. Opens Sept. 11. **AMY STEIN:** ClampArt, 521-531 W. 25th St. 646-230-0020. Opens Sept. 10. **JUERGEN TELLER:** Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923. Opens Sept. 10. **JAMES TURRELL:** Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St. 212-929-7000. Opens Sept. 10. **REBECCA WARREN:** Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200. Opens Sept. 10. **MATTHEW WEINSTEIN:** Nitsch, 534 W. 22nd St. 212-645-2030. Opens Sept. 10. **"ONE MINUTE MORE":** The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. Opens Sept. 10.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

JESSICA DICKINSON
The best of Dickinson's three painted panels and four works on paper, all abstract and more or less four feet wide, will slow you down and knock you out. Each surface was months in the making: trowelled with layers of plaster, sanded and painted, sanded and painted, and gouged and scored with knives. The results are as metamorphic as they are painterly, though history looms large. The verdigris-and-bone-colored "Distance—Come Closer," in its crumbling surface and pellucid blues, recalls a Florentine fresco; the nested rectangles in the pearl-gray and yolk-yellow "Here" serve Rothko and Albers sunny-side up. Through Sept. 20. (Fuentes, 35 St. James Pl. 212-577-1201.)

Short List

TAUBA AUERBACH: Deitch Projects, 18 Wooster St. 212-343-7300. Through Oct. 3. **CARTER:** Salon 94 Freemans, 1 Freeman Alley. 212-529-7400. Opens Sept. 9. **RACHEL FOULLON:** Beauchene, 163 Eldridge St. 212-375-8043. Opens Sept. 9. **ALEX KATZ:** Peter Blum, 99 Wooster St. 212-343-0441. Through Oct. 24. **ADAM PUTNAM:** Taxter & Spengemann, 123 E. 12th St. 212-924-0212. Through Oct. 17. **SARA GREENBERGER RAFFERTY:** Uffner, 47 Orchard St. 212-274-0064. Opens Sept. 9. **DAVIS RHODES:** Team, 83 Grand St. 212-279-9219. Opens Sept. 9. **JACOB ROBICHAUX:** Museum 52, at 4 E. 2nd St. 347-789-7072. Opens Sept. 10. **KEHINDE WILEY:** Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 212-343-7300. Through Sept. 26. **"IF YOU LIVED HERE STILL: A PROJECT BY MARTHA ROSLER":** E-Flux, 41 Essex St. 212-619-3356. Through Oct. 31.

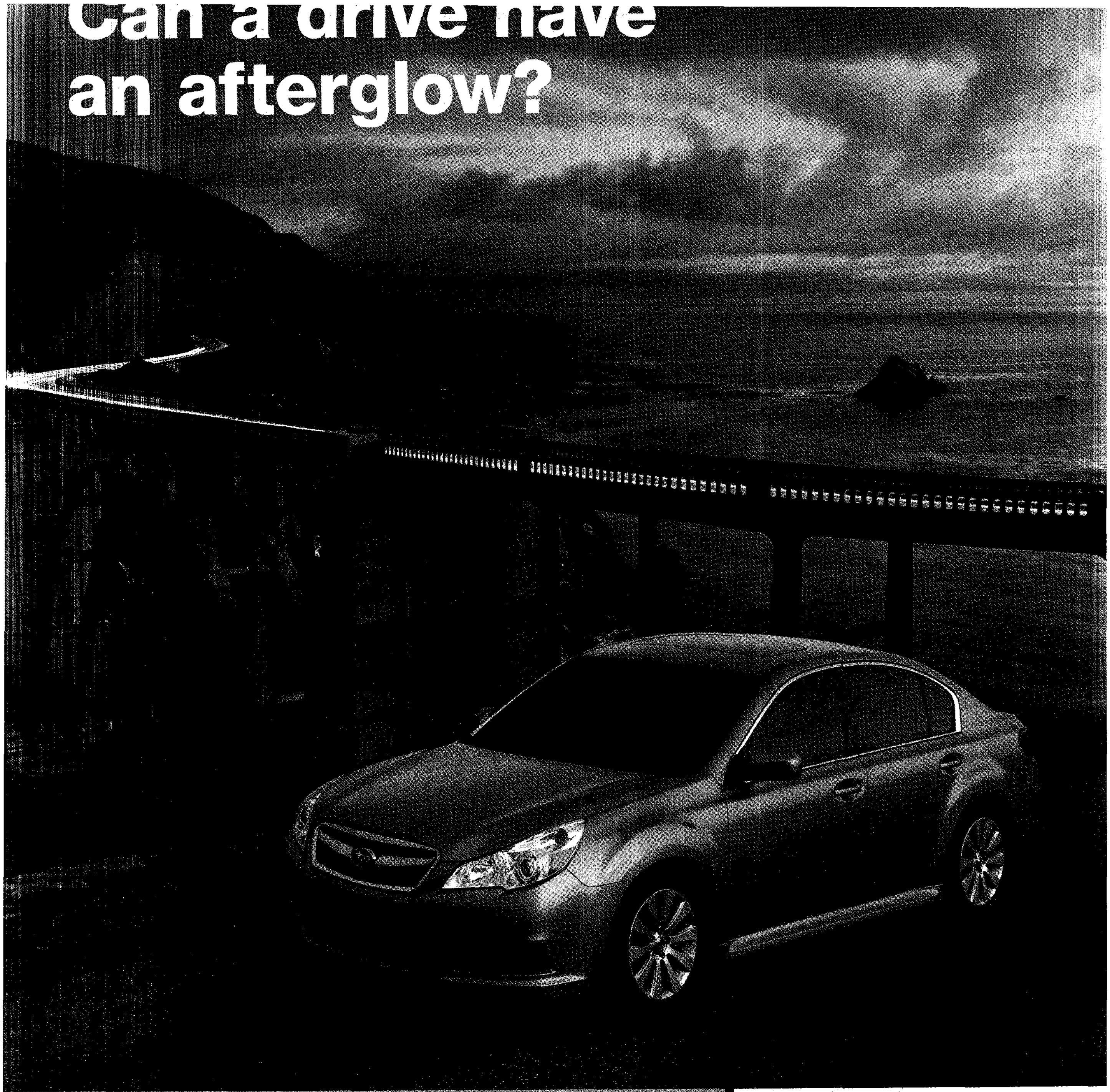
DANCE

"DANCENOW [NYC]"
Fifty companies performing in five grab-bag programs, veterans alongside newcomers, adds up to a comprehensive picture of the contemporary scene. Companies include Lindsey and Jason Dietz Marchant, Nicholas Leichter and Monstah Black, Dušan Týnek, TAKE Dance, Julian Barnett, Doug Elkins, David Dorfman, and Monica Bill Barnes. For a full schedule, visit www.dancenow.org. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Sept. 8-12 at 7:30.)

AMERICAN DANCE GUILD PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL
The annual festival will present excerpts, solos, and short works by several dozen companies and artists (including Francesca Harper, the Australian group Phluxus, and Lauri Stallings), anchored by tributes to two modern-dance masters, Donald McKayle and Erick Hawkins (who died in 1994). The Erick Hawkins Company will perform the architectural quartet from 1963, "Cantilever I," Sept. 10-11; and McKayle—who will attend Thursday and Saturday evening—will be represented by his powerful 1972 solo "Angelitos Negros" and a more recent work, "I've Known Rivers." (Manhattan Movement and Arts Center, 248 W. 60th St. 212-868-4444. Sept. 10 at 7:30, Sept. 11 at 8, Sept. 12 at 3 and 8, and Sept. 13 at 3.)

PIERRE RIGAL
In his remarkable solo "Press," the French athlete turned dancer, who last amazed New York audiences by reënacting human evolution, inhabits a dark box whose ceiling slowly and repeatedly closes in on him, like a garbage compactor. In between crushings, aided by some space-age sound effects and spare lighting, Rigal manages theatrical illusions of unusual wonder—shifts of magnetic force, fluctuations of gravity, headlessness. These effects, underplayed in the manner of great mime, slip between comedy and foreboding, twin modes of astonishment. (Baryshnikov Arts Center, 450 W. 37th St. 212-868-4444. Sept. 10-11 at 8 and Sept. 12 at 2 and 8.)

"WORKS & PROCESS"
The refreshingly unpredictable series kicks off the season with two very different choreographers, Peter Quanz and Larry Keigwin, who have each been commissioned to make a dance set to Steve Reich's jazzy "Double Sextet," from 2007. Quanz comes from ballet, while Keigwin is a regular on the downtown experimental/cabaret scene, so expect a study in contrasts. Quanz's piece will be performed by members of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and Keigwin will bring his own versatile and quirky troupe. A discussion will follow; Reich will attend the Saturday-evening performance. (Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 212-423-3587. Sept. 11 at 7:30 and Sept. 12 at 2 and 7:30.)



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SUBARU.

NEW CHAMBER BALLET
This chamber company offers excellent, often challenging music (played by topnotch company musicians) and thoughtful choreography performed by lovely, committed dancers. Four works by the company's director, Miro Magloire, include an atypical foray into the Romantic repertoire, and there will be a new work by Constantine Baecher, who currently dances with the Royal Danish Ballet, set to music by the contemporary Danish composer and former dancer Martin Stauning. (City Center Studio 4, at 130 W. 56th St. 212-868-4444. Sept. 11-12 at 8.)

MIGUEL GUTIERREZ AND THE POWERFUL PEOPLE
Gutierrez's new work, "Last Meadow," is about James Dean. Michelle Boulé is done up to look like the screen icon, joined in a love triangle by Tarek Halaby, unshaved in a pleated skirt and falsies, and Gutierrez, a sinister figure in a sweater and tie. This trio of committed and compelling performers acts out scenes from Dean's films, doubling roles, rewinding and replaying sections, and verbalizing close readings of the actor's histrionics. These distancing techniques, which pall with repetition, get overwhelmed by eruptions of the id beneath the fifties, bursts into passionate harmony, and demented aerobics. It's a mishmash, but the kind in which seemingly random comments, spoken out of character, turn out to be thematically relevant. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Sept. 15 at 7:30. Through Sept. 19.)

"IN-I"
The French actress Juliette Binoche is known for her portrayals of intensely emotional women, while the British-born dancer and choreographer Akram Khan is known for his powerful virtuosity—especially in kathak, the traditional Indian dance form in which he was trained. We only get a glimpse of Khan's dancing ability here, but it's not really the point: "In-I," directed and performed by Khan and Binoche, is a dialogue about love using movement, and it's ultimately closer to one of Binoche's explorations of troubled relationships (think "Blue" or "Damage") than to a pure dance piece. Since the body is where much of love's conversation takes place, the translation to movement makes sense. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Sept. 15 at 7:30. Through Sept. 26.)

"GROOVALOO"
From Los Angeles and TV dance-show fame comes this touring hip-hop production, a fast-moving interweaving of autobiographies told through dance scenes and voice-over monologues. The inspirational platitudes and hokey literalism might be endurable if the dancing weren't so dull. While the diversity of the cast speaks to hip-hop's vast be-yourself appeal, the disappointing level of skill and imagination suggests dilution. Save for a few flashes of B-boy brilliance, this is hip-hop lite. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Sept. 15 at 7:30. Through Sept. 27.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERTS IN TOWN

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
In two programs at Carnegie Hall, the orchestra goes "pops" like never before. Sept. 9 and Sept. 11 at 8: Andrea Bocelli, the superstar crossover tenor, joins the Philharmonic in two concerts that will offer vocal and instrumental music by Bach (including "Sheep May Safely Graze"), Bellini, Verdi, and Puccini, along with a trio of "Ave Maria" settings (by Caccini, Schubert, and Gounod); Asher Fisch conducts. ♦ Sept. 12 at 8: Bocelli, a pop tenor who reveres the classical tradition, is one thing; Trey Anastasio, the guitarist and founder of the jam band Phish, is something else. With Don Hart, he has created "Time Turns Elastic," a florid concerto for electric guitar and orchestra. He gets out front with the Philharmonic to perform the New York première of the piece, along with more of his music; Fisch, again, conducts. (212-247-7800.)

MILLER THEATRE: "WORDLESS MUSIC MEETS MILLER FESTIVAL"
At last, the two youthful, cutting-edge promoters of new music meet up. Melissa Smey's series at the Columbia University space gives Ronen Givony's upstart series room to roam, presenting a variety of groups that bring indie rock, electronica, and modern classical together; the mix includes concerts by the 802 Tour (featuring Nico Muhly), Do Make Say Think, and the JACK Quartet. (Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Sept. 9-12 at 8. For details, see www.millertheatre.com.)

MUSICIANS FOR HARMONY
The group's annual Concert for Peace—an event that began in the wake of 9/11—is more eclectic than ever: the program includes performances by the Shanghai Quartet (in Debussy's String Quartet in G Minor), the Pakistani singer Nauman Khan Lasharie, the Eastern European-inspired fare of the avant-folk group Ljova and the Kontraband, and a set from the Supremes legend Mary Wilson. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Sept. 10 at 7:30.)

DICAPO OPERA: "EMMELINE"
This was the first of Tobias Picker's several operas, premièred by the Santa Fe Opera in 1996 and staged at New York City Opera two years later; based on a Judith Rossner novel, it transfers the Oedipus myth to nineteenth-century New England. Kristin Sampson takes the title role in a production directed by Robert Alföldi, the head of Hungary's National Theatre; Samuel Bill conducts. (Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St. 212-868-4444. Sept. 10 at 7:30, Sept. 11-12 at 8, and Sept. 13 at 4.)

BARGEMUSIC
After spending a week splashing about in the ocean of new music, the floating chamber-music series docked at Brooklyn's Fulton Ferry Landing returns decisively to the classics. Sept. 11 at 8: The barge's annual concert held in commemoration of the 9/11 disaster offers music by Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, and Rachmaninoff. Admission is free. ♦ Sept. 12 at 8: Michael Bulychev-Okser begins a fall series devoted to the Beethoven piano sonatas with performances of the Sonatas No. 1 in F Minor, No. 9 in E Major, No. 25 in G Major, and No. 17 in D Minor (the "Tempest"). ♦ Sept. 13 at 3: Glenn Dicterow, the concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic, teams up with his friends in the Amerigo Trio—the violist Karen Dreyfus and the cellist Inbal Segev—in string trios by Kodály, Leó Weiner, Gideon Klein, and Beethoven (in C Minor, Op. 9, No. 3). (718-624-2083.)

"MOVING SOUNDS 2009" FESTIVAL
This is a big week at (Le) Poisson Rouge. In collaboration with the Austrian Cultural Forum, it hosts a series of concerts that maintain a "dialogue about sound" that spans classical, experimental, and popular styles and includes works by a range of Austrian and American composers. Sept. 12 at 7:30: The Argento Chamber Ensemble—whose director, Michel Galante, is a prime mover of the festival—performs the U.S. and world premières, respectively, of works by two important Austrian composers, Bernhard Lang and Beat Furrer ("Xenos II"); the concert closes with an appearance by Mantra Percussion, playing Steve Reich's "Music for 18 Musicians." ♦ Sept. 13 at 8: The world première of Lang's "Monadologie IV" (for three drummers) is featured in a concert by TimeTable Percussion and the d.j. Christopher Just that includes new works by Sam Pluta, Elizabeth Hoffman, and Furrer. ♦ Sept. 14 at 9:30: The festival's closing night features performances of string quartets by Furrer and Aaron Cassidy, offered by the daring JACK Quartet, with a party to follow. (158 Bleecker St. www.lprnyc.com. For full details, and for a schedule of concerts and events at the Austrian Cultural Forum, see www.argentomusic.org.)

POLKASTRA: "APOLKALYPSE NOW"
(Le) Poisson Rouge goes down-home with a performance by the irrepressible violinist Lara St. John's avant-polka band, which offers a mix of folk standards and its own unique creations. (158 Bleecker St. www.lprnyc.com. Sept. 14 at 7.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS
The eccentric but valuable Jens Nygaard tribute ensemble hosts an eminence of the viola, the former New York Philharmonic principal Paul Neubauer, who joins the violinist Stefan Milenkovich and several Jupiter musicians in works by Beethoven, Johann Georg Distler, Mozart (the Quintet in E-Flat Major for Horn and Strings), and Mendelssohn (the fleet and affecting String Quintet No. 1 in A Major). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. 212-799-1259. Sept. 14 at 2 and 7:30.)

PAUL JACOBS
Jacobs, a Juilliard School faculty member and the leading light of young American organists, opens the conservatory's performance season by playing the six trio sonatas of J. S. Bach at Paul Hall. (Juilliard School, Lincoln Center. Sept. 15 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 212-769-7406.)

OUT OF TOWN

"COPLAND HOUSE AT MERESTEAD"
The Westchester organization that maintains Aaron Copland's Cortlandt Manor house as an intimate composer retreat has moved boldly to expand its activities (with the help of Westchester County) by establishing a center for musical creation and performance at Merestead, a grand country estate with more than a hundred acres of land. The opening weekend offers two concerts (as well as a family program). Sept. 11 at 7:30: In "A New World Salon," the Music from Copland House ensemble (including the pianist Michael Boriskin) performs works by Copland and a distinguished former protégé, John Corigliano. ♦ Sept. 13 at 3: The ensemble returns to offer "From the Salon to the Concert Hall to the Cabaret," a century-spanning survey of works by Copland, Amy Beach, and Paul Schoenfield. (Mount Kisco, N.Y. 914-788-4659.)

"PEAK PERFORMANCES@MONTCLAIR": SHANGHAI QUARTET
Montclair State University's just-out-of-town series, held in the impressive Alexander Kasser Theatre, begins its season with a concert by its energetic ensemble-in-residence, which performs string quartets by Beethoven (the "Serioso," Op. 95) and Dvořák, as well as Brahms's String Sextet No. 2 (assisted by members of the Tokyo String Quartet). (Montclair, N.J. 973-655-5112. Sept. 12 at 8.)

TANNERY POND CONCERTS
Christian Steiner's elegant little festival, nestled in a barn in a former Shaker village, presents a concert offered by the clarinettist Todd Palmer, in which he joins a group of friends (including the harpist Bridget Kibbey and the cellist Edward Arron) to perform a program of music by Debussy (the "Première Rhapsodie" and the Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp), Tchaikovsky, Britten, and Messager. (New Lebanon, N.Y. 888-820-1696. Sept. 12 at 8.)

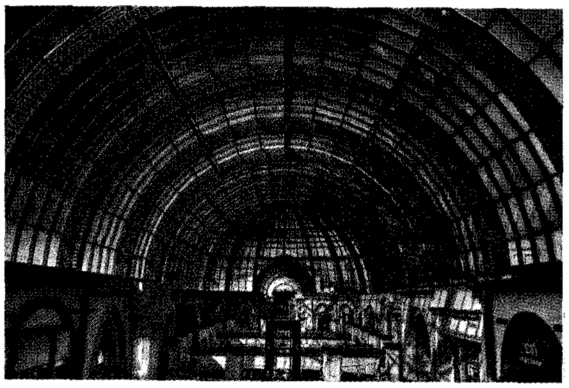
SOUTH MOUNTAIN CONCERTS
September brings the return of this longtime series, which snags a collection of upper-crust performers who have just finished their rounds at the big summer festivals. This week's concert is offered by the pianist Wu Han and the cellist David Finckel, along with the violinist Philip Setzer, Finckel's colleague from the Emerson String Quartet, who will perform the two piano trios by Franz Schubert. (Pittsfield, Mass. 413-442-2106. Sept. 13 at 3.)

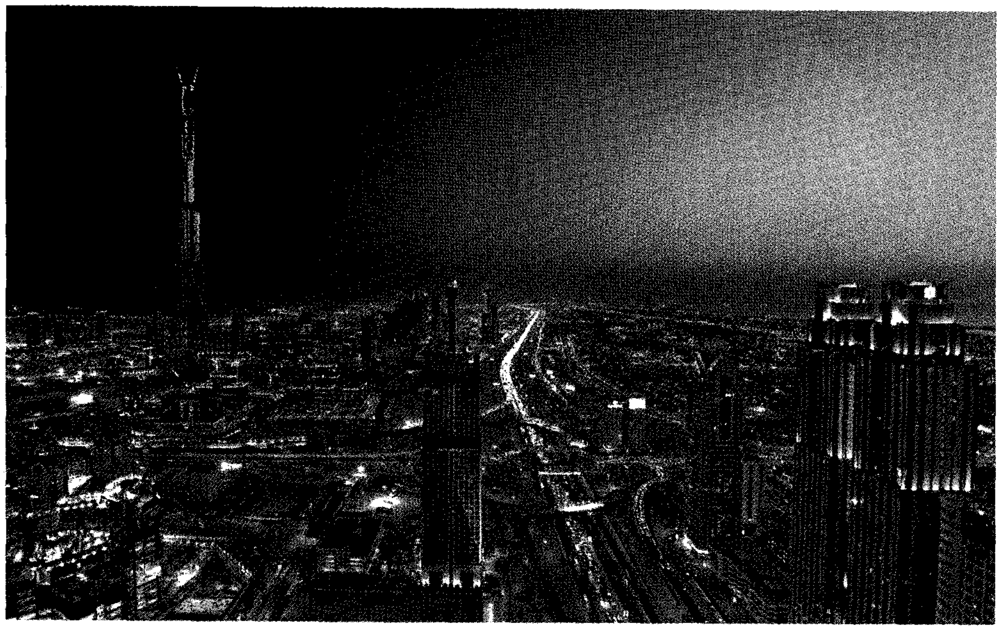
MOVIES OPENING

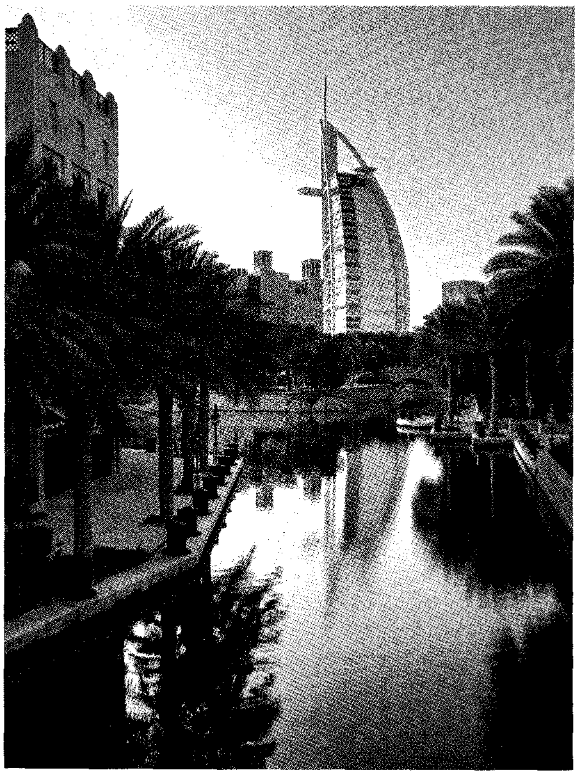
BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT
Peter Hyams directed this remake of Fritz Lang's 1956 film noir, about a journalist who attempts to expose a district attorney's corruption. Starring Michael Douglas, Jesse Metcalfe, and Amber Tamblyn. Opening Sept. 11. (In wide release.)

CRUDE
A documentary, directed by Joe Berlinger, about the legal battles over an oil spill in South America. Opening Sept. 9. (IFC Center.)

I CAN DO BAD ALL BY MYSELF
In this drama, directed by and co-starring Tyler Perry, three young delinquents go to live with their



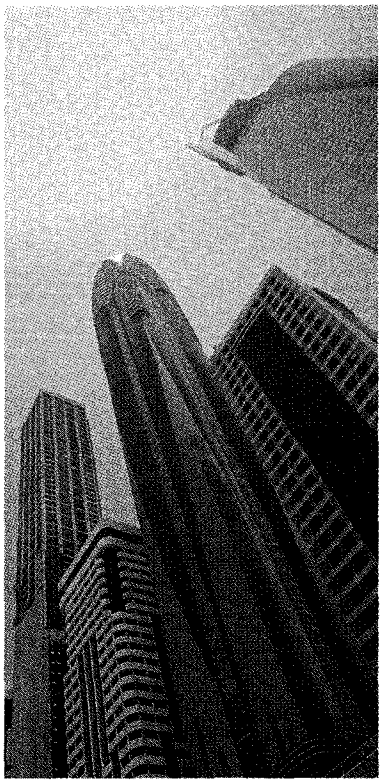


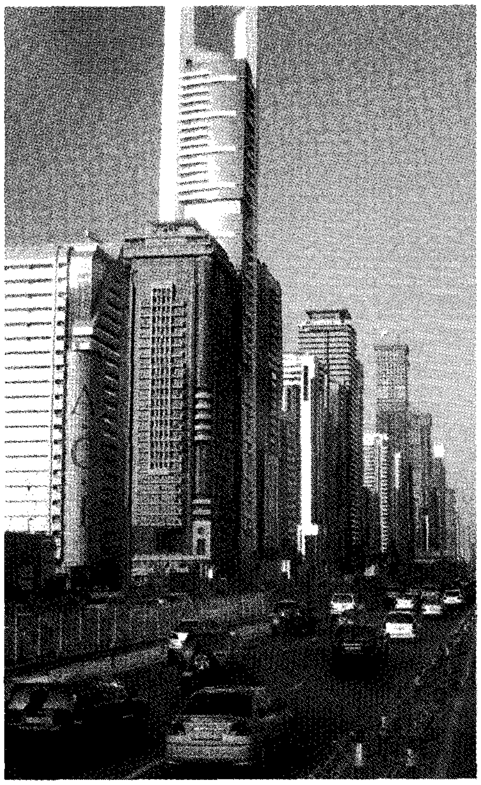


Crossroads of the Mideast Gets World-class Connectivity

Travelers around the globe may experience train envy when Dubai launches its new Metro this month. The driverless light-rail system is a first for the Gulf region and will ultimately be the longest fully automated train in the world.

Visitors accustomed to steamy subway platforms in their home cities will likely be impressed by the Metro's modern, air-conditioned stations, which will feature retail conveniences like food outlets and ATMs. Each train will have wireless Internet access and cell-phone reception, as well as a luxury gold class of service, with wide leather seating and panoramic views through the front window of the train. Most fares will be priced at less than two dollars a ride.





For the growing number of travelers who are discovering Dubai's soft, sandy beaches, tax-free shopping centers, architectural wonders, and elegant state-of-the-art hotels, the Metro and other rail and marine options are making it faster and more convenient to see Dubai's considerable sights in style. Thr city's transportation options also have other important benefits; reducing traffic, energy use, and emissions to create a cleaner, healthier environment.

The first phase of the Metro's launch is the thirty-two-mile Red Line, a mostly elevated track that follows Dubai's main thoroughfare, **Sheikh Zayed Road**. Route stops include popular destinations like **Deira City Centre**, the **Dubai International Financial Centre**, the **Mall of the Emirates**, the **Burj Al Arab hotel**, and the **Jumeirah Islands.** Other stations will open as nearby projects are completed, like the **Burj Dubai**, the world's tallest building, which is expected to make its début before the end of the year. This highly anticipated skyscraper will feature an indoor-outdoor observation deck and the first **Armani Hotel**, set to occupy the building's lower floors.

A second phase, the fourteen-mile Green Line, is planned to be up and running in March, 2010. It will follow a U-shaped path around **Dubai Creek** and **the Dubai Marina**, crossing the Red Line at two underground transfer points. The system will eventually connect to **Dubai International Airport**, offering a convenient, comfortable ride to another state-of-the-art transportation project. The new **Emirates Terminal 3**, located at the heart of the airport, has airy, light-filled arrival and departure points featuring luxury lounges, international restaurants, world-class shopping, and three spas.

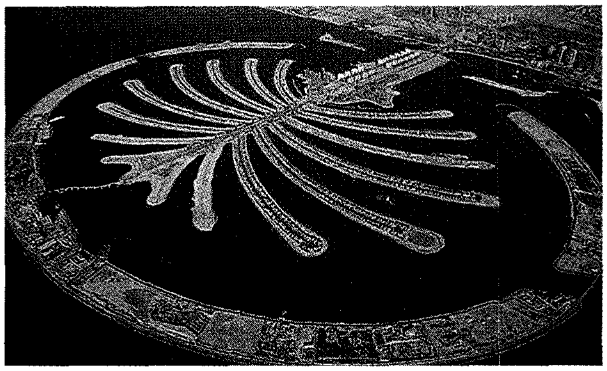
Indeed, the Metro project is just one part of Dubai's aggressive public-transportation strategy, which aims to move people more quickly as the city expands and the number of visitors to Dubai continues to grow.

Last spring, a monorail began running on **Palm Jumeirah Island**, connecting the mainland to the **Atlantis hotel** and **Aquaventure water park** at the Palm's tip, an easy ten-minute ride. The monorail was built with sensitivity to the island's visitors and residents, using rubber wheels instead of metal to reduce noise and maintain the area's tranquil environment. Plans are under way to connect the monorail to the Metro's Red Line, part of Dubai's effort to link the city's trains, buses, and boats.

The waterways are also getting new transportation options, like an air-conditioned hop-on, hop-off water-bus service that makes five stops along Dubai Creek. The marine route starts near **Heritage Village**, which features traditional artisans and exhibits, and ends at Creek Park, with stops in between at the Deira Centre's gold souks and the **Bur Dubai historic district**, home to the **Dubai Museum** and many hotels.

Other routes provide four point-to-point ferry rides across Dubai Creek, and stations along these waterways also link to the new Metro. Many Metro stations will have free parking to encourage drivers to park and ride. In line with Dubai's commitment to convenience, travelers can purchase a single fare card for use on the Metro, public buses, and waterbuses, as well as the paid parking areas at the train stations. This growing network of services will entice people to use public transportation, as well as help to reduce travel times.

One thing hasn't changed. Dubai continues to demonstrate its love of superlatives, with an integrated, modern transit system that sets new standards in comfort and convenience, making it easier for visitors to experience all the world-renowned features of this dynamic city.



Visit www.definitelydubai.com for more information.

COVER IMAGES, FROM TOP LEFT: MALL OF THE EMIRATES GALLERIA ©MOHAMED SALEH WITH SOWAR ONLINE; METRO IMAGE COURTESY OF DUBAI ROADS & TRANSPORT AUTHORITY; BURJ DUBAI IN THE NIGHT SKY ©FRITZ MUELLER; DUBAI CREEK AND THE BURJ AL ARAB ©VICKY NORWICH. *THIS PAGE:* TOWERING STRUCTURES ©DAVID MCCORMACK; SHEIKH ZAYED ROAD BY DAY ©PAUL SUTTON; JUMEIRAH PALM ISLAND ©SAMUEL LEO

wild aunt. Co-starring Taraji P. Henson, Brian White, Hope Olaide Wilson, and Adam Rodriguez. Opening Sept. 11. (In wide release.)

9

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Sept. 9. (In wide release.)

THE OTHER MAN

Richard Eyre directed this drama, based on a novel by Bernhard Schlink, about a man (Liam Neeson) who befriends his wife's lover (Antonio Banderas). Co-starring Laura Linney. Opening Sept. 11. (Empire 25 and Sunshine Cinema.)

WALT & EL GRUPO

A documentary, directed by Theodore Thomas, about Walt Disney's 1941 trip to South America with a group of animators. Opening Sept. 11. (In limited release.)

WHITEOUT

Dominic Sena directed this thriller, about a U.S. marshal (Kate Beckinsale) who is sent to Antarctica to investigate a murder. Opening Sept. 11. (In wide release.)

NOW PLAYING

AMERICAN CASINO

The husband-and-wife team of Leslie (director and writer) and Andrew (writer) Cockburn, veterans of many documentaries on arms policy and nuclear weapons, have finally made a movie about a nuclear disaster that actually happened—their subject is the social ecology of the recent financial meltdown. They filmed interviews with bankers, financial commentators, and homeowners suffering foreclosure, and pulled together sorrowful footage of stable neighborhoods—both prosperous and working class—slipping into dereliction, with junk-laden yards, boarded-up doorways, and squatters taking control of abandoned houses and charging rent to the homeless. And they make the necessary connections: it turns out that what happened at Bear Stearns and Goldman Sachs affected such things as the mosquito levels in Riverside County, California (the insects breed with fecundity in abandoned swimming pools). The highlight of the film is a long interview with a former banker at Bear Stearns who explains with great precision how collateralized debt obligations work, a piece of chicanery so preposterous that one doesn't know whether to weep or set off a bomb on Wall Street.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 9/7/09.) (Film Forum.)

THE BAADER MEINHOF COMPLEX

The Red Army Faction, a left-wing terrorist group founded in Germany in 1970, was referred to by the public—though not by the members themselves—as the Baader Meinhof Gang. This historical drama, directed by Uli Edel and based on the book of the same name by Stefan Aust, takes us scrupulously through the heyday of the group, in the nineteen-seventies, each deed more brazen and brutal than the last: the bombing of a newspaper office, the daylight murders of prominent German citizens, the siege of an embassy in Stockholm, the hijacking of a Lufthansa jet, and so forth. The director's moral mission to lay out the full saga clashes awkwardly with the aesthetic imperative to keep it tight, but it's hard to resist being plunged afresh into this engulfing age of European anxiety. The parents of Gudrun Ensslin (Johanna Wokalek)—at once the most appealing and the most unbending of the R.A.F.'s inner circle—provide the burning, unexpected heart of the film. Their suggestion, in response to her trial, of the spiritual roots of political extremism is something to ponder. Yet once you learn that Hanns Martin Schleyer (Bernd Stegemann), whom the R.A.F. kidnaps and executes in the final act of the story, was not only a businessman but, in a former life, an officer in the S.S., the movie's warning rings clear: the pressures of history can be hard to bear.—*Anthony Lane* (8/31/09) (Angelika Film Center.)

BANDSLAM

A terrific teen musical is not an oxymoron, though that's a term any number of the smart kids who populate this funny, stylish fantasy of high-school life might use. Gaelan Connell plays Will, a nerdy, self-doubting loner who reveals his innermost thoughts in unanswered e-mails to David Bowie. But when he and his mom (Lisa Kudrow, who gets maximum comic value out of every line) move to New Jersey, things start looking up. Improbably, Will finds himself managing an underdog band competing in the huge interscholastic contest of the title. The writer-director Todd Graff hits a lot of the genre's familiar notes—Will learns important lessons about love, friendship, confidence, and facing fears—but what this movie gets so right, and why it succeeds, is the sheer joy of rock and roll. With Aly Michalka as the friend and Vanessa Hudgens as the girlfriend.—*Ken Marks* (In wide release.)

COLD SOULS

The title of Sophie Barthes's début feature is accurate enough (people's souls are indeed being extracted and refrigerated for safekeeping), but it sounds much too glum for the sprightliness of wit that her story displays. Paul Giamatti plays himself, or, rather, a version of his crotchety screen persona—mobile in expression but sunken in spirit—that rubs close to the real thing. Not wishing to be bowed down by performing Chekhov, he pays for a silvery quack (David Strathairn) to remove his soul and then, a while later, replace it with that of a poet. At the same time, a Russian woman (Dina Korzun), whose job is to smuggle souls across borders, steals the immortal part of Giamatti—which resembles a wad of gum—and takes it back to St. Petersburg, with its owner in baffled pursuit. The science of this process, as the doctor himself admits, is not exact, yet the conceit is played so straight, and the characters' reactions to it seem so plausible (Emily Watson, in the role of the hero's wife, is wide-eyed with dismay), that we are left free to savor the strange blend of riskiness and despair that it involves. Not to be outdone, the cinematography, by Andrij Parekh, watches over these absurdities with a brooding calm.—*A.L.* (8/10 & 17/09) (In limited release.)

(500) DAYS OF SUMMER

He (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) is a romantic who studied architecture but is frittering away his salad days writing greeting cards. She (Zooey Deschanel) is a free-spirited cynic floating through life who happens to land in his office as an assistant and, soon, in his bed as a lover. Whether love itself will blossom is the whole story. For a movie about heartfelt connections, its characters have no depth or substance; for one about love, it has no chemistry or spontaneity; the action takes place in Los Angeles, though we see almost none of that city; and a reference to "The Graduate" does the film no favors. Forcedly cute, clumsily mechanical, overde-

CLASSICAL MUSIC • FALL PREVIEW

PUNY

EAST IS WEST

One could be forgiven for thinking that the winds of economic change haven't buffeted Carnegie Hall. Clive Gillinson, its director, will continue his tradition of fulsome fall festivals with "Ancient Paths, Modern Voices," a celebration of Chinese culture and its fruitful interaction with Western musical traditions, which will occupy multiple venues across the city. Among the stars who will take part are the pianists Lang Lang and Yundi Li, young artists of differing styles who have each enjoyed great acclaim. Li performs a solo recital at Stern Auditorium (Nov. 1), repeating it the following evening at Flushing Town Hall; Lang plays chamber works with young Chinese musicians (Oct. 27), performs a new piece by Chen Qigang with Michael Tilson Thomas conducting the Juilliard Orchestra (Oct. 28), and is the soloist in Tan Dun's Piano Concerto, with Long Yu and the China Philharmonic (Nov. 10). Carnegie's standard classical programming remains robust, with such attractions as Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmonic performing music by Brahms and Schoenberg (Nov. 11-13) and an exciting collaboration between the downtown icons of the Bang on a Can All-Stars and the shining voices of the all-female Trio Mediæval (at Zankel Hall, Nov. 21).

OPERA RARA

The Metropolitan Opera season begins on Sept. 21 with a new production of "Tosca" featuring the diva Karita Mattila, but the autumn's other operatic highlights are works that are either new or neglected. The Met brings in Esa-Pekka Salonen—in his début—to conduct the company's first performances of Janáček's "From the House of the Dead," in a production featuring yet another Scandinavian phenom, the baritone Peter Mattei (Nov. 12-Dec. 5). Operatic rescue missions have been the most valuable element of Leon Botstein's directorship of the American Symphony Orchestra, a trend that continues with a concert performance of d'Indy's "Fervaal" (Oct. 14). George Steel's eagerly awaited first season at the helm of New York City Opera—in the recently renovated David H. Koch Theatre—features a new production of "Don Giovanni" (opening Nov. 8) but begins bravely with a revival of Hugo Weisgall's Biblical epic "Esther" (Nov. 7), a critically hailed American opera from 1993. Across the East River, BAM presents Philip Glass's new opera, "Kepler," conducted by his devoted colleague Dennis Russell Davies (Nov. 18 and Nov. 20-21).

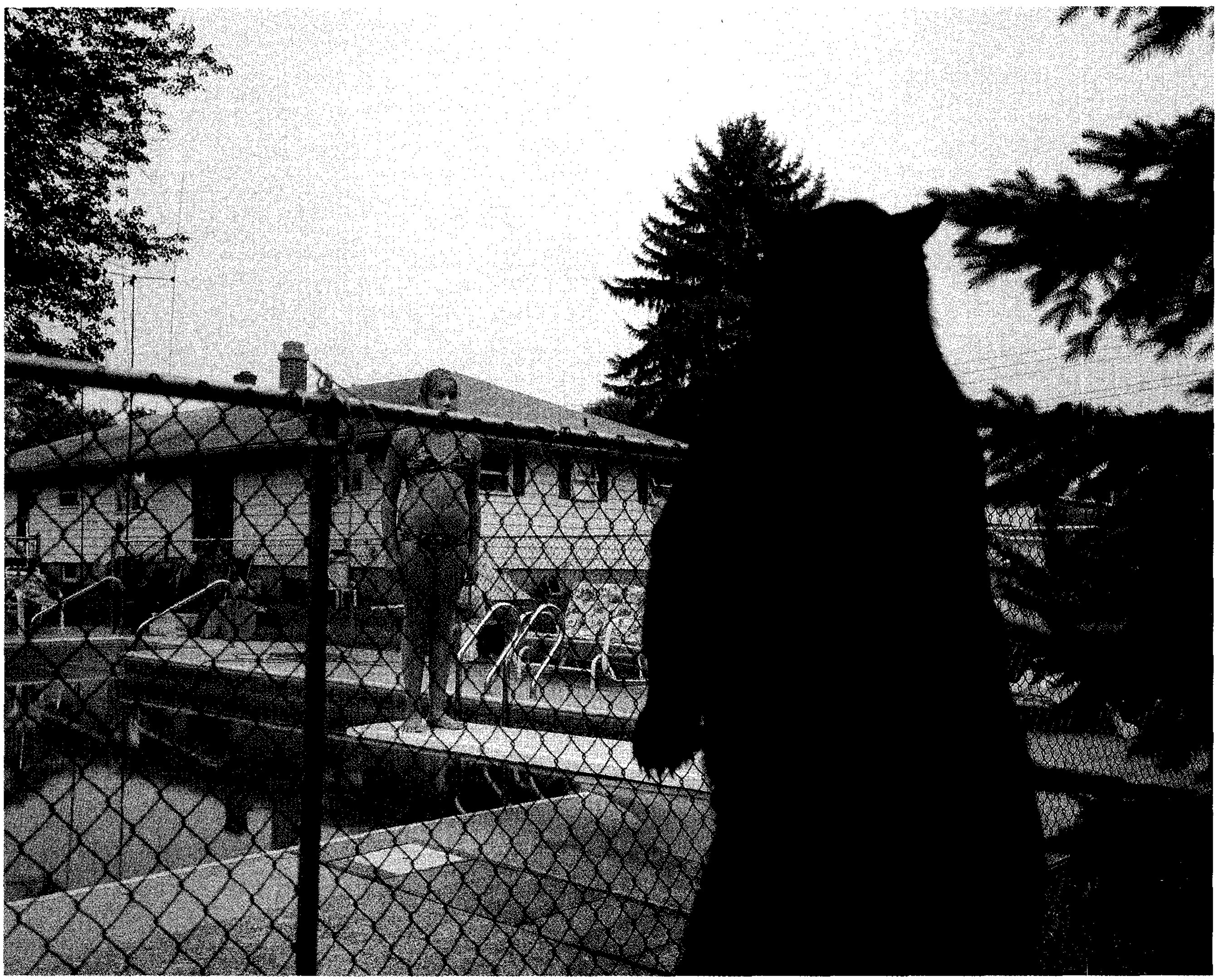
SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

As always, the city's more intimate concerts provide a diverting complement to larger fare. Consider the West Village music club (Le) Poisson Rouge, which has a flexibility and a lack of pretense that other venues strive to match. It presents appearances by the violinist Gil Shaham (Sept. 29), the performers of the Gotham Early Music Scene (Sept. 30-Oct. 2), and the glamorous Met soprano Danielle de Niese (Oct. 6), along with the Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble's acclaimed interpretation of Terry Riley's "In C" (Nov. 8). Classical purists, on the other hand, can head to the 92nd Street Y on Oct. 25 to hear the probing German violinist Christian Tetzlaff perform all of Bach's solo sonatas and partitas.

termined, and undernourished, this ostensibly soulful romance is a plastic void. Directed by Marc Webb.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

FUNNY PEOPLE

Judd Apatow's richest, most complicated movie yet—a hilarious and uneasily brilliant dramatic meditation on the relation of comedy to the rest of life. The movie is filled with Los Angeles comics at many career levels, including three young men (Jason Schwartzman, Seth Rogen, and Jonah Hill) who live together in an apartment and deal with one another via filthy, hostile jokes, and a prickly and friendless wreck of a comedy star (Adam Sandler, in a revelatory performance) who lives in an oppressive Malibu mansion. The star, who is seriously ill and beginning a bitter withdrawal from life, takes one of the young men (Rogen) into his house as a gag writer, punching bag, flunky, and nurse. As an unstable, combative bond develops between them, the star, with his protégé in tow, tries to renew a relationship with an actress he once loved and betrayed (Leslie Mann); he crashes like an errant meteor into the family life that his old flame has established in Northern California. The performing rhythm of the comics, on- and offstage, is dictated by infantile jokes; the rhythm of family life is something entirely different. In the end, comics are heroes for Apatow, but their heroism may cut them off from the kind of existence he believes in. Like “Knocked Up,” this movie asks, What does it take to be a husband? With Eric Bana, many L.A. comics (we get a good idea of their backstage rivalries, insults, lingo), and the children of Apatow and Mann, Maude and Iris.—*D.D.* (8/3/09) (In wide release.)



“Watering Hole,” a photograph by Amy Stein, in her exhibition “Domesticated,” at ClampArt.

HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE

One principle of a successful franchise—see James Bond—used to be that each episode should be able to stand alone, in the hope of attracting the uninitiated. Not so with Harry Potter. The sixth chapter in the history of the boy wonder, based on the penultimate novel in the series, presumes an intricate familiarity with the preceding installments, and with the dramatis personae scattered through them. Our hero (Daniel Radcliffe) is still locked in an alliance with the kindly Dumbledore (Michael Gambon) and in a duel with the powers of malice, led by the absent Voldemort and incarnated in the Malfoy clan. As if that weren't enough to cope with, he and his chums Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emma Watson) also find themselves atremble with unwonted stirrings of desire, or, at any rate, with the urge to sit down and mope. Excitement is delivered by a squad of airborne Death Eaters, who bring chaos to London and, in the end, calamity to the school; but, under David Yates's direction, what was once a magical spree grows dark with a willful and unearned solemnity. Only Evanna Lynch, as a batty schoolgirl named Luna Lovegood, seems possessed by the old spirit of fun.—*A.L.* (7/27/09) (In wide release.)

THE HEADLESS WOMAN

The international art film is a genre with as many conventions as the most commercial products, and the Argentinean writer and director Lucrecia Martel adheres to them with practical craft but little originality. Taking cues from Antonioni's visions of an alienated bourgeoisie, she follows Vero (María Onetto), a pale, tightly wound dentist who, while driving along a lonely road, reaches to answer her cell phone and runs over—or thinks she's run over—a child. The rest of the film is the record of Vero's grim composure and its fissures in the face of her sense of guilt. Martel's visual style—with its ambiguous, off-balance compositions, framing actors at uneasy distances in awkward spaces—is at the service of a thinly realized, heavy-handed story. Martel ratchets up the story's political implications, highlighting the child's working-class background while depicting Vero and her milieu confined behind gates and guards, frittering away their lives talking about pets and fashions and indulging in gardening, hunting, school parties, and social rounds. Yet Martel tries to have it both ways, attempting to construct a rich reality by the accretion of ordinary and realistic detail, while stacking the narrative deck so rigorously that the characters evaporate into symbols almost upon their appearance. It is, ultimately, bourgeois spectators whose guilt is being stoked. In Spanish.—*R.B.* (Film Forum.)

THE HURT LOCKER

Over and over, Staff Sergeant William James (Jeremy Renner) walks to a bomb site in a heavy protective suit and tries to figure out how to pull apart the clumsily tangled wires and flimsy triggering devices of an I.E.D. (improvised explosive device). The two other members of James's team, the frightened young Eldridge (Brian Geraghty) and the wary, experienced Sanborn (Anthony Mackie), jerk their guns this way and that, covering him and screaming at anyone who moves. Kathryn Bigelow's movie is set in Baghdad in 2004, and it brings us, from its particular angle, closer to the dangers of the war than any other movie about this conflict. Bigelow keeps the space tight and coherent: no matter how many times she cuts away, you know exactly where James is in relation to the bomb—whether he's in the kill zone or far enough away to be safe. (You can't break up the integrity of space when space is the subject of your movie.) The movie is almost unbearably tense—it's a considerable achievement. With Guy Pearce and Ralph Fiennes in small roles. Written by Mark Boal.—*D.D.* (6/29/09) (In limited release.)

IN THE LOOP

A sour, all-hating satire from the director Armando Iannucci, who fulfills, to a fault, his desire to strip the last tatters of dignity and purpose from his characters. A British cabinet minister (Tom Hollander), his foot barely extricable from his mouth, lets slip an unguarded word about a possible war—looming, unspecified, but not so very far from Iraq. For his pains, he is sent to Washington for further humiliation, accompanied by an aide (Chris Addison) and harried by the Prime Minister's press secretary (Peter Capaldi), who is essentially Beelzebub in a suit. Both he and his equally foul-tongued deputy are Scottish, like Iannucci himself, and there is a definite flavor of jubilant, anti-English scolding in evidence—fitting enough, given the current Prime Minister, though the film's concerns seem more rooted in the era of Tony Blair and President Bush. The U.S. political class is viewed as no less venal than its British equivalent, and no less touched by absurdity, as when a uniformed general (improbably played by James Gandolfini) adds up troop numbers on a child's toy; still, when it comes to an inferiority complex, the Brits stand alone. The film is so mean and cramped to look at that even the sharper jokes, after a while, produce more of a headache than a laugh.—*A.L.* (7/27/09) (In limited release.)

INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS

In Quentin Tarantino's fantastical jest about the Second World War, a group of European film people and an American Army unit of vengeful Jews, the Basterds, led by a Gentile, Aldo Raine (Brad Pitt), separately plot to destroy the Nazi command, which has gathered at a movie theatre in Occupied Paris in 1944. For years, the Americans, operating in Occupied France, have been beating Nazi soldiers to death with a baseball bat and carving swastikas in their foreheads. Whether the Basterds are Tarantino's ideal of an all-American killing team or his parody of one is hard to say. Very little in "Basterds" is meant to be taken straight, but the movie isn't quite farce, either. It's lodged in an uneasy nowheresville between counterfactual pop fantasia and trashy exploitation. The picture isn't boring, but it's ridiculous, and stunningly insensitive—a teen-ager's dream of revenge too silly to enjoy, even as a joke. With the talented Christoph Waltz as a super-smart S.S. colonel. The role is a cliché of evil suavity out of old Warner Bros. movies, but Waltz is terrific at it.—*D.D.* (8/24/09) (In wide release.)

JULIE & JULIA

Meryl Streep as Julia Child, an American in Paris in the fifties, longing to write a cookbook, and Amy Adams as Julie Powell, a lost young American wife in Queens in 2002, who replicates Child's recipes. The structure is more a rhyming device than a dramatic idea, yet it works well enough to hold together a dual fable of driving ambition and anxious discipleship. The movie is memorable, of course, for Streep's performance. Like a tall ship at full sail, she leans, tilts, and billows. Odd explosions of air—whoops, exclamations—come hurtling through the passageways. She runs out of breath, and then settles, mysteriously, like an old Bible that italicizes ordinary words, on a single syllable. Nora Ephron, who wrote and directed, is interested in food less as something to cook than as the binding and unifying element in marriage, dinner parties, and friendship. In all, one of the most charming American movies of recent years. With Stanley Tucci and Chris Messina as supportive husbands. Based on books by Child and Powell.—*D.D.* (8/24/09) (In wide release.)

LITTLE FUGITIVE

At its core, this pioneering independent film from 1953 is an urban heart-warmer, but it has a fresh, gritty surface and a Grade A horror-comic hook: a seven-year-old boy (Richie Andrusco), believing that he has fatally shot his older brother, goes on the lam. The tension peaks when the boy pulls the trigger, a moment that serves to epitomize claustrophobic mean-street queasiness and keeps the rest of the film from seeming sappy. Morris Engel, the cinematographer, who shares the writing and directing credits with Ruth Orkin (his wife) and Ray Ashley, uses a handheld camera to exploit the wonders of Coney Island; the result is a lively essay on ball-toss games, pop-bottle deposits, pony rides, and human midsections of all varieties, as seen from a four-footer's perspective. Truffaut considered the film an inspiration for the French New Wave—and no wonder. This valuable record of love and pain on the beach captures unique vignettes, like that of a pair of lovers staking out a spot on the sand, then hiding their heads under a towel as they snuggle and smooch.—*Michael Sragow* (IFC Center; Sept. 11-13.)

LIVERPOOL

A calmly but thinly observed sketch of life in wintry rural Argentina is protracted by its director, Lisandro Alonso, into a lugubrious meditation on industrialization and its discontents. It follows Farrel (Juan Fernández), a laborer on a cargo ship, who returns home to his somnolent village after many years' absence to see whether his mother is still alive. What he finds there is a daughter he's never met, Analía (Giselle Irrazabal), a grim adolescent who does schoolwork between farm chores, and he dangles before her the vision of a life that, if not better, would at least be different. Alonso allows long, sullen, mostly static shots to stand in for the boredom of manual labor, and lets other art-house clichés proliferate: the faux objectivity of his tableau-like camera style frames calculated, even contrived action, and the monosyllabic dialogue of his working-class heroes renders them artificially pathetic. As a result, his grand landscapes, whether industrial or natural, come more vibrantly to life than the characters who inhabit them. A lovely, limpid ending is too little, too late. In Spanish.—*R.B.* (Anthology Film Archives.)

MY ONE AND ONLY

A boy's sweet-natured but rather mild valentine to his mother. Anne Deveraux (Renée Zellweger) leaves her philandering, alcoholic bandleader husband (Kevin Bacon, who is good as always) and sets off with her two boys (Logan Lerman and Mark Rendall), travelling around the country in a pale-blue Cadillac convertible. Anne is like a Tennessee Williams woman—man-hungry but refined, and always looking (rather haplessly) for the guy who can save her. It's a movie about female courage in the pre-feminist era, and it has many poignant touches, but it lacks fire and the true colors of desperation. In the end, the older boy becomes an actor and changes his name to George Hamilton. Only then do we realize we have been watching the childhood of a great man. Directed by Richard Loncraine; written by Charlie Peters.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

PANDORA AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Certifiably one of a kind. Albert Lewin, who produced, directed, and wrote the story and screenplay, shows more visual feeling than common sense. James Mason, in his gloomily romantic period, is, literally, the doomed sailor, and Ava Gardner (looking unspeakably luscious) is an American playgirl in evening clothes who wanders through exotic, poetic landscapes before sacrificing herself to save him. Lewin's direction is static, yet his staging is so luxuriantly mad that it's easy to get fixated on what, if anything, he could have had in mind. Sally Bowles might have called it divinely incoherent. The English production, shot in Spain, has a mostly British cast—Nigel Patrick, Pamela Kellino (Mason), Marius Goring, and John Laurie. Cinematography by Jack Cardiff. Released in 1951.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; Sept. 14.)

PONYO

The latest film from the celebrated Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki is a reworking of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid." Sosuke, a boy living with his mother in a cliffside shack with the ocean below, makes friends with a goldfish, Ponyo, who wants to be human. A good part of the movie takes place in the sea or on the beach—the volatile, ever-shifting nature of water brings out Miyazaki's virtuosity with dynamic shaping and variation. Some of the fable is a little too sweet, though Sosuke's mother (voiced by Tina Fey) is a tough cookie and drives the story forward. Pixar's John Lasseter supervised the English version. With the voices of Cate Blanchett, Liam Neeson, Matt Damon, Lily Tomlin, Cloris Leachman, and Betty White.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

TABLES FOR TWO
LOCANDA VERDE

ELIZA HONEY

377 Greenwich St. (212-925-3797)—In certain areas downtown, new-money soullessness increasingly rubs up against Old World charm—behemoth glass-and-steel condo high-rises along two-hundred-year-old cobblestoned streets. So it's appropriate that Robert De Niro's Locanda Verde, which replaced the critic-trampled, short-lived Ago, in the Greenwich Hotel, seems at first glance rather high-end faux, or, as one diner put it, "like a restaurant in Denver called Tribeca." Everything feels new—the backlit mirrored shelves, the giant-hooded stainless-steel pendant lights, even the bricks—but the chef Andrew Carmellini's blissfully homey Italian food serves as a reminder that cooking what you grow is a very old, and very good, idea.

The restaurant's name, which means "green inn," indicates a market-inspired philosophy, reflected in the seasonally changing menu, which is, at its best—with dishes like beef-pork-and-veal-stuffed Grandma's Ravioli and ultra-rustic Gabagoul & Grana—even more comforting than it sounds. To start, there are cicchetti ("little snacks"), which include a heap of homemade sheep's-milk ricotta, sprinkled with sea salt and oregano and served with grilled country bread, and smooth chicken-liver spread on thin crostini, topped with golden sultanas. A salad of sweet local cherry tomatoes and watermelon, served with smoked ricotta from Abruzzi (it tastes like feta), channels Strega Nona; a lightly fried artichoke appetizer, with yogurt and specks of mint, complements a gorgeous thick-cut Colorado lamb chop, grilled, with a vincotto glaze, atop faro and chard. The porchetta sandwich, with pale shaved pork and melted provolone, is an aberrant downscale inclusion that should be saved for the street-cart expansion. But the pastas showcase Carmellini's spirit and skill—ethereal robiola-cheese ravioli, with tomatoes; maltagliati, randomly torn sheets of perfectly done pasta, tossed with pesto; creamy lemon risotto, rescued from monotony by vibrant chili oil and chives.

On a summer evening, the windows open to the breeze, a gaze at the sunset across the Hudson River affords a view of the gleaming silver Jersey City skyline. Lounging over cappuccino and brown-butter pistachio cake with plums, you might think, Maybe it's time to dig up some of Grandma's hallowed old recipes, back at the condo. (Open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Entrées $15-$27.)

—*Shauna Lyon*

THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE
As the title suggests, R. J. Cutler's conventional but engaging documentary about the inner workings of *Vogue* has its drama built into it: the race against time to compose and to complete the 2007 edition of the year's keystone issue, as seen from the top. Cutler anchors the film on a portrait of the magazine's editor-in-chief, Anna Wintour, but he wisely builds the action around her fruitful collaboration—and, at times, conflict—with Grace Coddington, *Vogue's* creative director, whose inspired concepts for photo shoots and hands-on stylings furnish the raw material for Wintour's synoptic shaping of the magazine and its place in the world. The regal André Leon Talley, the editor-at-large, provides comic relief, and, though the quick-cutting sprint through the wide-ranging action doesn't dig deep, the behind-the-scenes view of tussles with photographers and designers at least suggests the exacting aestheticism and practical smarts that fashion's fantasies both demand and reflect.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

TAKING WOODSTOCK
The new Ang Lee film is not about the great historical happening of forty years ago but about Elliot Teichberg (Demetri Martin), whose parents run a Borscht Belt motel. Teichberg himself runs a local arts festival—in reality, a few jazz records played over loudspeakers and a theatre troupe from Vassar—and has the permit to prove it. Armed with his rubber-stamped scrap of paper, Elliot is well placed to jump in when a nearby town turns down the Woodstock organizers. Their leader, the Bolan-haired Michael Lang, is played by Jonathan Groff, who—in his big-screen début—radiates such relaxing sweetness that everyone in his zone is goaded into action without complaint. Yet Lee's movie leaves much of its mellow drama unresolved, and rather too easily suggests the convergence of the bright shining counterculture with the capitalist ethic. (Though the special effects impressively transform the Woodstock crowd into a heaving human sea, it doesn't look like bliss but like Gustave Doré's vision of Hell.) Despite the smiling mood that wafts through the film like incense, not once does a character's show of feeling stir you, send you, or stop you in your tracks, and the loss is unsustainable. With Eugene Levy as Max Yasgur, and Liev Schreiber, in a blond wig and a thin cotton dress, as a transvestite Korean War vet who offers his services as a security enforcer.—*A.L.* (8/31/09) (In wide release.)

WE LIVE IN PUBLIC
The filmmaker Ondi Timoner seems destined to have made this documentary, about the profligate and elusive Internet pioneer Josh Harris, because, as her film reveals, she was a participant in some of its most dramatic events. Harris, who was a lonely child obsessed with "Gilligan's Island," understood the Web's transformative promise as early as 1980, and, in the nineties, founded Pseudo.com, a New York-based blend of streaming video and original content, for which he hired a horde of downtown artists and turned them loose in an environment that one observer likens to Andy Warhol's Factory. The film's turning point comes when he tries to realize his plans for interactive virtual reality in a basement commune—which he compares to a concentration camp—where volunteers would move in and sign themselves over, allowing their every move, including bed and bath activities, to be recorded. Timoner was there, and is captured in Harris's disturbing yet fascinating archival footage. He took the notion a step further in his next venture, as he wired his home with cameras and mikes, locked himself in with his girlfriend, and interacted online with viewers, who quickly moved from being spectators to being participants in the couple's life. Harris, in Timoner's privileged view, is graced and cursed with a visionary strangeness. Artist, con artist, and businessman, genius, clown, and control freak, he nonetheless brought forth dark wonders, which the director thankfully rescues from oblivion.—*R.B.* (IFC Center.)

WORLD'S GREATEST DAD
This dark comedy, written and directed by Bobcat Goldthwait, is a timely reminder of how good an actor Robin Williams can be. Williams plays a poetry teacher and aspiring novelist who is trying to connect with his troubled teen-age son. When things go horribly wrong, he reshapes his son's life in a deceitful and self-promoting way. Goldthwait brings out the subject's uncomfortable humor (the story turns on a heinous fraud), and, to his credit, he keeps the film nihilistic and unsentimental prior to its less than convincing redemptive ending. It's a bumpy ride, and some of the absurdist humor goes wide of the mark, but Williams's enigmatic, level performance helps it take the cynical turns well.—*Bruce Diones* (In limited release.)

Also Playing

BIG FAN: Angelika Film Center. **THE FINAL DESTINATION:** In wide release. **PASSING STRANGE:** In limited release. **SHORTS:** In wide release. **STILL WALKING:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. **THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE:** In wide release.

MOVIES • FALL PREVIEW

LARA TOMLIN

YOUTH WILL BE SERVED
Adaptations of classic children's books are big business this fall, beginning with "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs" (Sept. 18), Phil Lord and Chris Miller's 3-D animated take on Judi and Ron Barrett's blend of manna and Midas. Spike Jonze co-wrote his live-action version of Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are" (Oct. 16) with Dave Eggers; Max Records and Catherine Keener star. Wes Anderson directs "Fantastic Mr. Fox" (Nov. 13), which he and Noah Baumbach adapted from Roald Dahl's tale of adventure, featuring stop-action animation and the voices of George Clooney, Meryl Streep, Bill Murray, Jason Schwartzman, and Owen Wilson. Miguel Arteta's teen romance "Youth in Revolt" (Oct. 30), from the novel by C. D. Payne, stars Michael Cera, Steve Buscemi, and the newcomer Portia Doubleday.

CREATURE FEATURES
The directors Paul and Chris Weitz are blood brothers: Chris takes charge of "The Twilight Saga: New Moon" (Nov. 20), the second film based on Stephenie Meyer's series of teen vampire romances, starring Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson; Paul's action comedy "The Vampire's Assistant" (Oct. 23) stars Chris Massoglia as a boy who gets into the spirit of a travelling freak show.

BY THE BOOK
Charlize Theron, Viggo Mortensen, Guy Pearce, and Robert Duvall star in "The Road" (Oct. 16), based on Cormac McCarthy's post-apocalyptic thriller and directed by John Hillcoat. Peter Jackson directs "The Lovely Bones" (Dec. 11), starring Saoirse Ronan, Mark Wahlberg, and Rachel Weisz in an adaptation of Alice Sebold's novel about the earthly apparition of a murdered girl. "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire" (Nov. 6), directed by Lee Daniels, tells the story of a teen-age mother and abused child, played by Gabourey (Gabby) Sidibe, who takes charge of her life with the help of a teacher (Paula Patton) and a caseworker (Mariah Carey).

AUTEUR, AUTEUR
Pedro Almodóvar's "Broken Embraces" (Nov. 20), a flashback-filled melodrama set in the world of movies, stars Penélope Cruz as an actress and Lluís Homar as her director and lover. A Midwestern Jewish community in 1967 is the setting for Joel and Ethan Coen's "A Serious Man" (Oct. 2), about a professor (Michael Stuhlbarg) who turns to rabbis for advice as his marriage and his life collapse. "The Informant!" (Sept. 18), directed by Steven Soderbergh, tells the story of the risks faced by a corporate whistle-blower (Matt Damon). "Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans" (Nov. 20), Werner Herzog's remake of Abel Ferrara's 1992 drama about a police officer in crisis, stars Nicolas Cage in the title role.

THE INTERNATIONAL
Tom Hooper's "The Damned United" (Oct. 9), based on a novel by David Pearce, stars Michael Sheen in the real-life drama of Brian Clough, a legendary, idiosyncratic soccer coach of the nineteen-sixties and seventies. "Coco Before Chanel" (Sept. 25), directed by Anne Fontaine from a nonfiction book by Edmonde Charles-Roux, features Audrey Tautou as a young seamstress on the rise. And the great documentary filmmaker Frederick Wiseman returns with "La Danse: The Paris Opera Ballet" (Nov. 4), a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to put on the show.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—"Essential Cinema." Sept. 10 at 7: "Confirmation Day" (1934, Karl Valentin; in German, without subtitles; English synopsis available). ♦ Sept. 10 at 8:30: "Enthusiasm" (1931, Dziga Vertov; in Russian, without subtitles; English synopsis available). ♦ Sept. 12 at 3:30: "The Eleventh Year" (1928, Dziga Vertov; with Russian intertitles; English synopsis available). ♦ Sept. 12 at 5: "Man with a Movie Camera" (1929, Dziga Vertov; silent). ♦ "Goethe-Institut New York." Sept. 10 at 7:30: "War at a Distance" (2003, Harun Farocki; in German) and "Nothing Ventured" (2004, Farocki; in German). ♦ In première. Sept. 11-17 at 7 and 9: "The Painter Sam Francis" (2008, Jeffrey Perkins). ♦ In revival. Sept. 11-13 at 7:30: "Suspiria" (1977, Dario Argento).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—The films of Robert Redford. Sept. 9 at 6:50: "Downhill Racer" (1969, Michael Ritchie). ♦ Sept. 10 at 6 and 9:30: "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" (1969, George Roy Hill). ♦ Sept. 12 at 2: "Quiz Show" (1994, Redford). ♦ Sept. 12 at 5: "The Sting" (1973, Hill). ♦ Sept. 12 at 8: "All the President's Men" (1976, Alan J. Pakula), followed by a Q. & A. with Redford. ♦ Sept. 13 at 12:30: "Jeremiah Johnson" (1972,

Sydney Pollack). ♦ Sept. 13 at 3: "Out of Africa" (1984, Pollack). ♦ Sept. 13 at 3:10: "The Natural" (1985, Barry Levinson). ♦ Sept. 13 at 3:15: "The Electric Horseman" (1979, Pollack). ♦ Sept. 13 at 3:30: "The Way We Were" (1973, Pollack). ♦ Sept. 14 at 6:50: "Ordinary People" (1980, Redford). ♦ Sept. 15 at 6:50: "El Norte" (1983, Gregory Nava). ♦ Sept. 15 at 9:40: "The Unforeseen" (1992, Laura Dunn). ♦ In première. Sept. 11 at 7: "Paris" (2008, Cédric Klapisch; in French), followed by a Q. & A. with the director and Juliette Binoche.

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. Sept. 9-13 and Sept. 15-17 at 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, and 10: "Odd Man Out" (1947, Carol Reed). ♦ The films of James Mason. Sept. 14 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Pandora and the Flying Dutchman" (†).

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (212-875-5610)—"The Latinbeat Film Festival." All films are in Spanish. Sept. 9 and Sept. 14 at 4:15 and Sept. 13 at 3:30: "Odd Number" (1962, Manuel Antin). ♦ Sept. 9 at 6:30: "Music on Hold" (2009, Hernan A. Goldfrid). ♦ Sept. 9 at 9:15: "Norah's Will" (2008, Mariano Chenillo). ♦ Sept. 10 at 5: "Celestial Clockwork" (1994, Tristan Bauer). ♦ Sept. 10 at 9: "The Good Life" (2008, Andres Wood). ♦ Sept. 11 at 6:40: "Love by Accident" (2008, Ines Braun). ♦ Sept. 11 at 9: "The Milk of Sorrow" (2009, Claudia Llosa). ♦ Sept. 12 at 3:15: "The Camera Obscura" (2008, Maria Victoria Menis). ♦ Sept. 12 at 5:20: "One for the Road" (2009, Eva Lopez Sanchez). ♦ Sept. 12 at 9:50: "Acne" (2008, Federico Veiroj). ♦ Sept. 13 at 7:15: "The Ballroom" (2007, Laís Bodanzky). ♦ Sept. 15 at 6:30: "The General" (2008, Natalia Almada).

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—A tribute to Juliette Binoche. Sept. 8 at 7: "Juliette Binoche, Sketches for a Portrait" (2009, Marion Stalens), followed by a discussion with the director and Binoche, moderated by Charlie Rose.

IFC CENTER

323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—In revival. Sept. 11-13 at 11 A.M.: "Little Fugitive" (†). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." Sept. 11-13: "Miller's Crossing" (1990, Joel Coen).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"An Auteurist History of Film." Sept. 9 at 1:30: "Origins of the Motion Picture" (1956, United States Naval Photographic Center) and "Eadweard Muybridge, Zoopraxographer" (1975, Thom Andersen). ♦ "Critical Favorites: The New York Film Critics Circle at 75." Sept. 9 at 4: "All About Eve" (1950, Joseph L. Mankiewicz). ♦ Sept. 10 at 4:30: "Les Diaboliques" (1955, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French). ♦ Sept. 10 at 8: "Mon Oncle" (1958, Jacques Tati; in French). ♦ Sept. 11 at 4:30: "Wall-E" (2008, Andrew Stanton). ♦ Sept. 12 at 5: "Amarcord" (1973, Federico Fellini; in Italian). ♦ Sept. 12 at 8: "A Clockwork Orange" (1971, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ Sept. 13 at 2: "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" (2007, Cristian Mungiu; in Romanian). ♦ Sept. 14 at 4:30: "Hannah and Her Sisters" (1986, Woody Allen). ♦ In première. Sept. 9 at 7: "Elevated" (2009, Doug Aitken). ♦ "Continuum: Recent Film Acquisitions." Sept. 9 at 7: "Moulin Rouge" (2001, Baz Luhrmann). ♦ The films of Roy Andersson. All films are in Swedish. Sept. 10 at 4: "A Swedish Love Story" (1970). ♦ Sept. 10 at 7: "Songs from the Second Floor" (2000), introduced by the director. ♦ Sept. 11 at 4: Student films by Andersson, including "Visiting One's Son" (1967), "To Fetch a Bike" (1968), and "Saturday October 5" (1969), introduced by the director. ♦ Sept. 11 at 8: "Giliap" (1975), introduced by the director. ♦ Sept. 12 at 6:30: "Tomorrow's Another Day" (2009, Johan Carlsson and Pehr Arte), introduced by Andersson. ♦ Sept. 12 at 8: "You, the Living" (2007). ♦ Sept. 13 at 5:30: "Adalen Riots" (1969, Bo Widerberg). ♦ "ContemporAsian." Sept. 11 and Sept. 14 at 7, Sept. 12 at 1:30, and Sept. 13 at 5: "Dajang Soembi, the Woman Who Was Married to a Dog" (2004, Edwin; in Indonesian), and "Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly" (2008, Edwin; in Indonesian).

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RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—"Cabaret Cinema." Sept. 11 at 9:30: "How to Steal a Million" (1966, William Wyler).

READINGS AND TALKS

BOOKCOURT
Two Brooklyn authors who have new novels about present-day life in the borough read from their latest works. On Sept. 9 at 7, Lucinda Rosenfeld offers selections from "I'm So Happy for You." On Sept. 15, also at 7, Amy Sohn celebrates the release of "Prospect Park West." (163 Court St., Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.)

"DOES MISERY LOVE COMEDY?"
The humor writers Bill Scheft, Mark O'Donnell, and Larry Doyle consider their creative muse. (The JCC in Manhattan, Amsterdam Ave. at 76th St. For reservations, e-mail events@wgaeast.org. Sept. 9 at 8.)

"POETRY FROM THE ROOFTOPS"
The Academy of American Poets' annual summer reading series concludes with Arda Collins, Fady Joudah, and Jonathan Thirkield. (The roof of the Arsenal, Central Park, Fifth Ave. at 64th St. For more information, visit www.poets.org. Sept. 10 at 6:30.)

SOLAS
St. Mark's Bookshop presents a reading series at this watering hole, which is just around the corner from the East Village shop. On Sept. 10 at 7:30, Sam Lipsyte, Thomas Beller, Betsy Berne, and other contributors to "Lost and Found: Stories from New York" read their pieces about the city. (232 E. 9th St. No tickets necessary.)

IDLEWILD BOOKS
Ben Winters celebrates the publication of "Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters," his literary mashup of Jane Austen's novel, which is a follow-up to his "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies." For this event, Winters will be joined by other local authors. (12 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary. Sept. 15 at 7.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

DUTCH TREATS
"NY400 Week" celebrates four hundred years of friendship between New York and the Netherlands. Timed to celebrate the quadricentennial of the arrival of Henry Hudson, in September of 1609, it begins Sept. 8 and features many events. Highlights include the following. A replica of New Amsterdam housing is set up at Bowling Green Park, in lower Manhattan. Free bikes are available there to ride around town. A replica of Hudson's ship, the Halve Maen (Half Moon), will be docked at Battery Park on Sept. 9 from 10 to 1, and a replica of the Onrust, a Dutch trading ship built here and captained by Adriaen Block in 1614, will be at the South Street Seaport Museum Sept. 12-13. The week concludes on Sept. 13 with Harbor Day, a citywide waterfront celebration. Foodies will enjoy the Manhattan portion, as it includes the opening of the New Amsterdam Market, an experiment in reinventing public markets, near the old Fulton Fish Market, on South Street. Regional produce will be sold and workshops given. (For more information about NY400 Week, visit www.ny400.org. For details about the New Amsterdam Market, visit www.newamsterdammarket.org.)

BROOKLYN BOOK FESTIVAL
Paul Auster, Russell Banks, Francine Prose, and many other writers are expected to take part in readings and discussions in and around Borough Hall. Some hundred and fifty booksellers and publishers offering their wares will also be on hand. (Sept. 13, from 10 to 6. For more information, visit www.brooklynbookfestival.org.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
After two months of near-complete dormancy, the auction houses begin to wake up, hoping that this fall will mark a turnaround from last season's rather lacklustre sales. Experts say that it's a good time to buy wine (prices went down significantly last year), and **Christie's** obliges with a wine sale on Sept. 12 featuring an ample number of vintages from France, Italy, and California. (The selection includes a group of bottles from the cellar of the New York restaurant and cultural landmark "21.") Then it's on to the first sale of "Asian Art Week," with a variety of Chinese ceramics, bronzes, and sundry works of art (Sept. 14-15), featuring several pieces (archaic jades, bronzes, and Buddhist sculptures) from the collection of the late psychiatrist and philanthropist Arthur M. Sackler (on Sept. 14), the same collection that was featured in a successful sale of Asian art this past spring. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ **Doyle** offers a wide-ranging Asian-art sale (Sept. 14), with pottery, porcelain, jades, bronzes, and paintings from China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Many of the lots come from a private collection amassed by Hugh J. Grant (1858-1910), an Irish immigrant who became a successful real-estate developer in the latter half of the nineteenth century and, briefly, mayor of New York. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

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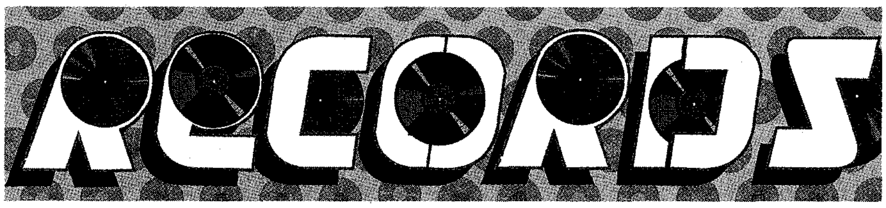
Visit the Goings On blog, at www.newyorker.com/go/goingson, for additional cultural coverage and commentary.



STEVE POWERS

POP NOTES
FALL SOUNDS

In the era of Internet music and the death of the major labels, it can sometimes seem as if big rock records don't exist any longer. They do. The longtime arena rockers Kiss have rededicated themselves to the studio, and the result is "Sonic Boom" (Loud & Proud, Oct. 6), an album that the band claims is its strongest set of original material since the seventies. The Flaming Lips will release "Embryonic" (Warner Bros., Oct. 13), a double album that promises to extend the band's uniquely spacey take on alternative rock. Weezer, which started as a college-rock favorite and has strayed closer to arena-rock territory, returns with "Raditude" (DGC, Oct. 27), and Bob Dylan will confound both his fans and his detractors with "Christmas in the Heart" (Columbia, Oct. 13), a collection of traditional holiday songs that will benefit the hunger charity Feeding America.

It's not all high-volume releases this fall. Lhasa de Sela, a beguiling vocalist from Montreal with roots in New York and Mexico, has a folksy new album, "Lhasa" (Nettwerk, Sept. 15), her first in six years. Roseanne Cash's "The List" (Manhattan, Oct. 6) finds the singer covering folk and country standards and collaborating with Elvis Costello and Bruce Springsteen. The freak-folk chameleon Devendra Banhart makes his Warner Bros. début on Oct. 13 with the release of "What Will We Be." Rickie Lee Jones has been a restless artist since her début album, in 1979; this fall, she releases her twelfth album, "Balm in Gilead" (New West, Oct. 20), a collection of originals that continues in the same spiritual vein as her last record, "Sermon on Exposition Boulevard." Norah Jones, who rose to fame as a soft-jazz chanteuse, has announced that her new, still untitled record (Blue Note), to be released in November, will feature more prominent guitar and collaborations with the alt-country performers Will Shef (of Okkervil River) and Ryan Adams.

The soul icon R. Kelly, who was acquitted of child-pornography charges, returns with yet another collection of irresistibly over-the-top R. & B.; his new album, "Untitled" (Jive, Oct. 13), was previewed on a mixtape this summer. The ever-reliable Roots are back with "How I Got Over" (Def Jam, Oct. 20). Along with Eminem's "Relapse 2," which is currently scheduled for release in late November, there are a number of other high-profile hip-hop albums this season, including two that have been delayed numerous times. Missy Elliott's "Block Party" and Big Boi's "Sir Lucious Leftfoot: The Son of Chico Dusty" may finally see the light of day, though fans shouldn't be surprised if they are postponed until 2010.

Big Boi's preposterous album title is a reminder of Frank Zappa's old question "Does humor belong in music?" At least two fall albums answer in the affirmative. Weird Al Yankovic's "The Essential Weird Al Yankovic" (Sony Legacy, Oct. 27) compiles the parodist's hits, and the Flight of the Conchords' "I Told You I Was Freaky" (Sub Pop, Oct. 20) allows the cable-TV clown-folk duo to build on their anti-stardom.

Finally, the boxes. The fall brings at least four lavish sets that, between them, should satisfy any pop fan. The four-decade partnership of Daryl Hall and John Oates is the subject of "Do What You Want, Be What You Are" (Sony Legacy, Oct. 6), which focusses mostly on the duo's mega-stardom of the early eighties. Dolly Parton may be better known these days for the Broadway musical "9 to 5," but "Dolly" (Sony Legacy, Oct. 27) proves that the singer is an enduring country legend. "Mythology" (Rhino, Nov. 3) makes the case yet again that the Brothers Gibb, better known as the Bee Gees, were Australia's answer to the Beatles before they became the world's answer to the question "What can disco do for me?" The set expands its scope to include Andy Gibb, the youngest brother, who was never in the Bee Gees but became a huge solo star before dying, after years of drug use, in 1988. John Mellencamp will release "On the Rural Route 7609" (Island, Nov. 17); the four disks will focus primarily on alternate versions of his best-known songs.

—*Ben Greenman*

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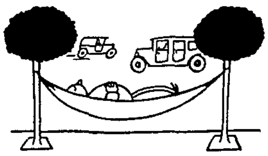
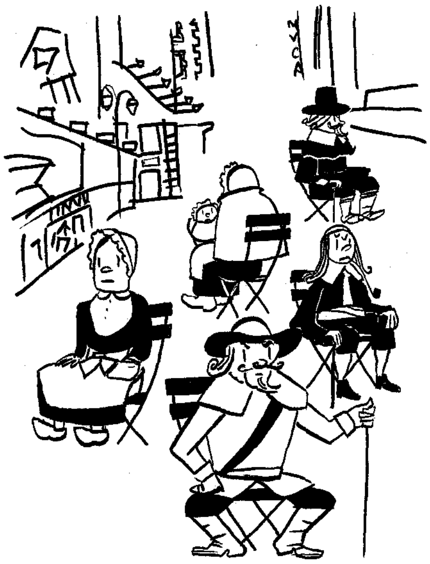


In 1642, a wheelwright named Claes Rademaker, stooping over a chest of duffels cloth, which he had intended to barter for beaver pelts, was axed in the back of the neck. The murder occurred, the settler David de Vries wrote, "on the Wickquasgeck road over which the Indians passed daily." This may be the first recorded mention of the Wickquasgeck, parts of which became Brede Weg, the north-south artery of New Amsterdam. Brede Weg was later Anglicized to Broadway, which, at various junctures and junctions—most famously, at Times Square—became many things to many people: casino, brothel, parade ground, planetarium, the Street of Broken Dreams, the Main Stem, the Great White Way. In the nineteen-eighties, Mayor Ed Koch, speaking of the proliferation of food venders in the area, called it "a souk." During the Giuliani era, strip bars closed down and office towers shot up, and Times Square, the trope goes, turned into a theme park. This summer, the Bloomberg administration decided to close Broadway to all vehicles between Forty-seventh and Forty-second Streets, creating a fifty-six-thousand-square-foot pedestrian plaza, stocked with pinkening Brits and pooped grandmothers. As a result, David Letterman said recently, "the greatest street in the world" has become a "petting zoo."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

You can see, to an extent, what Letterman meant. The new plaza, in the past few months, has been a hot, smelly enclosure, filled with people sitting under patio umbrellas comparing their cell-phone screens, which is what humans do instead of picking ticks out of one another's fur. The action, what there was of it, on a recent afternoon: dozers, lunchers, a Verizon repair guy reading the tabloids in the shade of his fibre-splicing truck—a makeshift cabana. A poster advertised a "Best of the Buskers" show, sponsored by the Times Square Alliance.

New Yorkers of a querulous mindset—that is to say, many New Yorkers—do not like the place. They consider it a simulacrum of itself. They see, in such known inducers of docility as urns of hosta and bright-colored plastic chaise longues (which, after much hostility, have been replaced with standard-issue metal chairs), a sort of state-sponsored tranquillization scheme. The transportation commissioner, Janette Sadik-Khan, Steve Cuozzo wrote in the *Post*, has "forced down the public's throat an unconscionable tampering with the chemistry of the city's most iconic place." In 2009, the argument has it, Mondrian's "Broadway Boogie Woogie" has become a still-life. Cleared of honking cabbies, Times Square is denatured—the Via Veneto *senza* Vespas—and maybe so are we.



The new Times Square, it is true, feels inert. But all the grousing about traffic and tourists isn't completely fair. Judging from the amount of Tupperware on display, locals are using the plaza, too. It will never be an elegant spot, like Central Park, or a sexy one, like Washington Square—you don't particularly want to figure out what book anybody else is reading in his or her metal chair. There are fewer lights to wait for on the way to work, though. Besides, Broadway has always been too nice, or not nice enough, for somebody. According to James Traub's "The Devil's Playground," during Prohibition sophisticates lamented that the libertine playground of years past—tango pirates, booze forts, lobster palaces—had given way to an unrecognizably anodyne play-pen for hayseeds and soda jerks. A decade later, the smut, starfish-like, had regenerated. Nobody liked that, either. In 1933, the newspaperman Stanley Walker wrote, "There are chow-meineries, peep shows for men only, flea circuses, lectures on what killed Rudolf Valentino, jitney ballrooms and a farrago of other attractions which would have sickened the heart of the Broadwayite of even ten years ago."

There is solace for modern-day handwringers in the High Line, the abandoned elevated rail bed that the city reclaimed this summer, from Gansevoort to Thirty-fourth Streets, and which is emerging as an unlikely redoubt of vice. According to the *Post*, guests have been putting on amateur skin shows in the floor-to-ceiling windows of the new Standard Hotel, at Thirteenth Street, which straddles what is referred to as the Thigh Line. (The hotel is the Eyeful Tower.) Letterman's Times Square analogy breaks down on the tactile level—who are the petters, and who are the pettees? Downtown, the petting is literal, exuberant, and heavy. Parkgoers, willingly or not, are voyeurs. The spontaneous rise of High Line lowlife seems to suggest a conservation theory of seediness: root it out in one place, and it will sprout up somewhere else. Whack a mole, and you may find, across town, the mole whacking itself.

The High Line, with its exposed tracks and sprays of wildflowers, might be considered a foil to Times Square. Lobbied for by designers and musicians, it is intended to convey instant insouciance. It is an indie park, an anti-campus, a pair of pre-ripped skinny jeans to Times Square's creased 550s. The Times Square plaza dissipates into the sidewalk, but the High Line is a tight and narrow catwalk, a picture with a frame. Chelsea boys, JDaters, and pretty women, dressed in rompers, promenade in front of people-watchers, perched like fashion editors on wooden benches: *urbe in rus*.

The glee with which New Yorkers have greeted the High Line's unauthorized entertainments (there is also a homegrown, lantern-festooned cabaret near Twentieth Street, on somebody's fire escape), and the grumpiness with which they have met the sanctioned ones at Times Square, may say less about our need for titillation than about our urge to demonstrate, as laissez-faire wanes and universal health care and the third reign of Bloomberg loom, that we retain some degree of volition. The parks are our town-hall meetings. We disrupt them, with shows of contempt, or little displays of impishness, for the same reasons that protesters tote AR-15s instead of talking about PPOs: to wrest a bit of control. The thrill of sullying pristine environments—of planting a handprint in freshly laid concrete—is particularly acute in those precincts in which there aren't many pristine environments left to sully. Mischief seeks its own level. It won't be long before someone finds a way to take back the Wickquasgeck.

—*Lauren Collins*

THE PICTURES

ROAD TRIP

As a boy, George Hamilton wanted to be a doctor, but his parents gave him no recourse but to be a movie star. Anne Stevens, his mother, was gorgeous and extravagant, and George William (Spike) Hamilton was a bandleader with a wandering eye. They divorced after Stevens found him in bed with his singer and declared, "You've taken a beautiful painting and smeared it."

Hamilton, still lithe as a mahogany sapling at seventy, was recently in the Hamptons for a screening of "My One and Only," a film based on an odd road trip that he and his brothers took with their mother in 1955. He sat on the porch of a friend's house with one leg flung over the arm of a wicker chair, wearing a blue Borrelli shirt unbuttoned to the fourth button, linen pants from Loro Piana, and tasselled loafers by Ralph Lauren. No socks, naturally.

He remarked that it was his mother who taught him how to dress, which reminded him of how the Fiat magnate Gianni Agnelli had provided him with a bespoke wardrobe—which reminded him that while he was in Rome filming "The Victors," in 1963, he'd arranged to meet the world's most beautiful woman, the actress Jocelyn Lane, in front of the Trevi Fountain. At her apartment, he folded his Agnelli-financed finery, and then, "just as I'm about to mount this incredible creature," he said, her enraged boyfriend began pounding on the bedroom door. Naked, Hamilton ducked out the window and crept along a ledge until he could slip into what turned out to be the maid's room: "So I know nothing to do except jump in bed with the maid!"

There was a lot more to the tale, involving a doorman's coat, Robert Mitchum, and Lane's boyfriend later popping up at P.J. Clarke's, in Manhattan, wearing Hamilton's suit. It was Hamilton's raconteurship that got Merv Griffin, the talk-show host and producer, interested in developing the tale of the road trip in the seventies. "My brothers and I came home one day for lunch—I was at the Hackley School," Hamilton said, laying out the premise, "and my mother, who was being pursued by creditors, had a TripTik map in her hand. She said, 'We're going on a vacation. We're going to visit every man I ever went out with, from the time I was in Miss Semple's finishing school, to find out if I made a mistake.' "

He continued, "She found the first one in St. Louis and told us, 'Most divine man I ever met—he made the winning touchdown in the Harvard-Yale game. I just don't want to surprise him with all of you.' So at the restaurant my brothers and I waited in the car. Twenty minutes later, she came out and said, 'Oh, my God. He's let himself go.' Further south, she'd tell the man, 'Meet me on the corner,' and we'd drive by very slowly and she'd say, 'Oh, no. Oh, no.' " The family wound up in Mexico City, quarantined by a suspected case of parrot fever. "We had no money at all, nothing, but they had to feed us steaks at the hotel, and my mother said, 'Don't you see, there's always good in everything? We're divinely supported.' And that was the story I told Merv in Acapulco."

The project spent so many years in turnaround that Griffin died waiting, but the film was finally made, with Renée Zellweger as Hamilton's mother and Logan Lerman as the courtly, conflicted fifteen-year-old Hamilton. Little is shown of Hamilton's relationship with his father,

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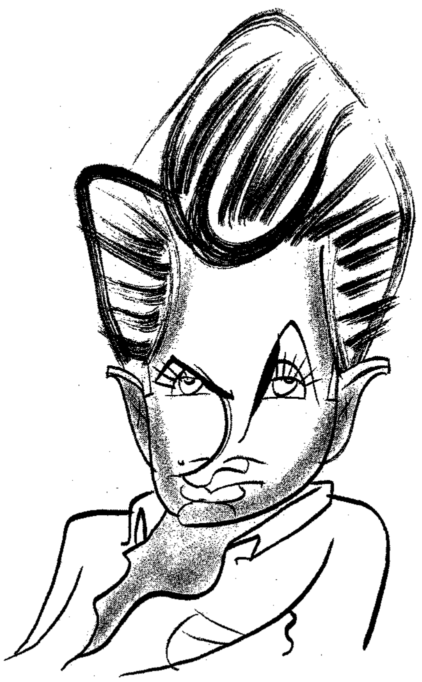
whom he had moved in with for a year when he was eleven. But Hamilton recalls that that breather year saved his life. He and his father would meet for lunch at the King Cole Bar, where the senior Hamilton would give his son advice, "the secret stuff you needed to know about women. He said, 'Always carry a handkerchief, and let her use it, let her cry.' And, 'Women will forget everything they've ever said. Allow them that.' And it's crude, but he said, 'With women, remember the three 'F's. You have to feed them, every day. You have to fuck them, every day. And you have to fight them, every day.'" That's a lot of work, no? "*Every day*," Hamilton repeated, grinning.

A quick study, Hamilton promptly began an affair with his stepmother, June Howard—the woman his mother had caught in bed with his father. "Her pelvis would arrive across the room before the rest of her," he explained.



George Hamilton

Last month, Hamilton took part in a Q. & A. about "My One and Only" after a Hollywood Film Festival screening. After the credits rolled, he said, "the moderator asked me a question, and I couldn't answer it. I was crying. I had never had that happen to me before, not at my mother's funeral, my brother's funeral. I couldn't hold it together," he said. "I'm slick, you know? But seeing that boy, *me* . . . it got to me."

—*Tad Friend*

DEPT. OF HOOPLA
NOTE TO SELF

Marco Larsen, a thirty-four-year-old public-relations man, has for six years been the head of his own small company, Public, nyc, and is now the author of his own small book, "Don't: The Essential Guide to Publicity in New York City and Any Other City That Matters." In it, Larsen issues a series of tart, pointed directives for those who would embark upon his profession, including "Cuff links without a jacket? Mumbai nightclub"; "DON'T rock your drawl"; and, crucially, "DON'T uz f***ing :P (; smileys!!! ;D." Larsen's model for the self-published volume, he explained, was a nineteenth-century etiquette guide, though it also owes a debt to the model of advice embodied by Carson Kressley, the "Queer Eye" star, who contributed a preface ("You've got the rules of the game in your hand—make them yours").

Kressley was to have been among the guests at a party Larsen threw the other night to celebrate the book, but he turned out to be otherwise engaged. "He's in Sag Harbor, doing a play," Larsen explained, brushing an invisible speck from his pin-striped pant leg and glancing at an impeccable wing tip. What happened to: DON'T throw a party when your celebrity guest is unavailable? "You have countless events when you hope the celebrity is going to come and they don't come," Larsen said, with resignation.

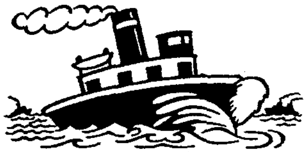
Who was there instead? There was the author's older brother, Eric Larsen, who recalled that when they were growing up in Denver the young Marco would hold underground boxing tournaments in abandoned warehouses. "I always saw him as an impresario," Eric said. Also, Larsen's hot-yoga teachers, Rachel Page and Carlos Rodriguez, who complimented him on his ability to stay in the room when the temperature rose above 105 degrees. Also, Tyler Wisler, an interior designer who works for Michael Braverman Design, from whom Larsen rents office space in Chelsea. (Braverman was recently obliged to downsize. "One of our biggest clients is going to jail very shortly—Marc Dreier," Wisler explained.) Wisler had a conflict with the party. "It's our 'gotcha day,'" he said—the two-year anniversary of the day on which he and his partner received their foster son, whom they hope to adopt. "But I said I'd be here for Marco."

The "Don't" party was held in the triplex penthouse of a hotel on the Lower East Side (page 137: "Fold press into the event and you can even negotiate on the rates"). An unused hot tub bubbled humidly on the deck; downstairs, Larsen's sponsors—a women's clothing company, a Scotch distillery, and a vender of fine stationery—displayed posters offering their own interdictions. ("DON'T rule out flats." "DON'T hand someone a pen with a chewed-up cap.") The book, Larsen explained, was a "call to action." "The P.R. industry needs to take itself more seriously," he said, adjusting his bow tie, which was decorated with a skull-and-crossbones motif. He added that publicists should "hoist up" journalists, a strategy that sounded alarmingly piratical until he explained that he meant that P.R. folk should provide reporters with facts and story ideas. Larsen's office had provided an advance copy of "Don't," accompanied by a letter noting that the book was "still in finalization mode with the editors." What about this for an idea: DON'T have a party for a book that isn't finished yet, especially when you're self-publishing? "There are a few copy-editing problems," Larsen admitted. "I found five or six misspellings that aren't egregious but are a thorn in my side."

Larsen has lived in New York for only six years; nonetheless, he is confident that he has the experience to issue advice on surviving in this particular Town That Matters. "They say that you become a New Yorker after ten years or after you've been robbed, and I've been robbed three times," he said. An early step was to seek the counsel of Howard Rubenstein, the doyen of New York publicity. "He was an absolute gentleman and was hugely encouraging," Larsen said. "So today I messengered him a copy of the book, and he called and sent an e-mail of congratulations." The book was, however, one of those in which the errors were still uncorrected. "Let's see if he reads it," Larsen said. Let's hope he don't.

—*Rebecca Mead*

ON THE WATER
SUPER-SOAKER



Nautically speaking, the difference between John J. Harvey, a seventy-eight-year-old engine-room-operated fireboat, and Jessica DuLong, the boat's thirty-six-year-old chief engineer, is that the John J. Harvey has spent a lot more time on the water—putting out the five-alarm fire that burned the Cunard pier in 1932, for instance. Except for a whale-watching trip when she was a child, DuLong has been on the water only since February, 2001. She had just been laid off from her job at a wellness Web site and, after a couple of volunteer events, found herself on the Harvey's crew. On September 11th of that year, the John J. Harvey—after being auctioned for scrap in 1999 and salvaged by preservationists—helped evacuate some of the three hundred thousand people fleeing the World Trade Center. It then used its water pumps to pump millions of gallons of water into downtown. "For the first time I see the boat pumping water with a purpose, doing the important work for which she was built," DuLong writes in her new book, "My River Chronicles: Rediscovering America on the Hudson."

The other day, eating a Caesar salad with shrimp, at Pier 66 in Chelsea, DuLong reviewed her career arc, a transition from psychology student to Web-content provider to fireboat volunteer. When she first started on the boat, she picked up a Sawzall to cut some pipes and immediately fell in love with physical work. She went on to get her Merchant Marine license and, eventually, to pilot a boat herself—the Gowanus Bay. Today, she balances engineering with freelance writing; she has contributed to both *Today's Machining World* ("Women in Machining") and *CosmoGIRL!* ("The Gender Spectrum").

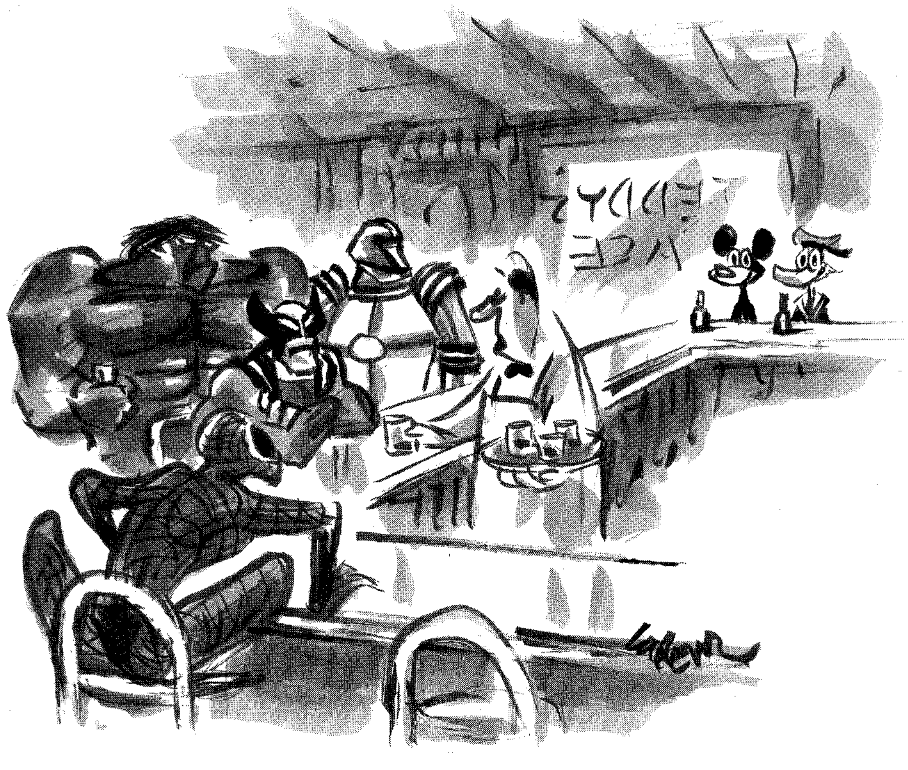
After a quick tour of the John J. Harvey, DuLong stopped by the wheelhouse to introduce her pilot, Bob Lenney, and then headed down to the engine room. Above deck, it was cool and breezy, with a few dozen kids from the Henry Street Settlement clambering on board. Below deck, the 130-degree heat thrown off by five 600-horsepower diesel engines, combined with bone-crushing noise, created the ambience of a Second World War submarine movie. The boat was actually built before the war—Mayor Jimmy Walker attended the Harvey's christening—and the engine room is, in DuLong's opinion, a tribute to an era of craftsmanship that is very nearly extinct. "We need to stop devaluing hands-on work," she said before the engines drowned her out. DuLong, wearing brown Carhartt work pants and a John J. Harvey crew shirt, was making adjustments when the pilot sent a telegraph signal down. The signal came in simultaneously as a loud bell and as a reading on two brass wheels (one for each propeller) that hang like clock faces on either side of DuLong's head. "He's anxious to go, but I'm not ready," she shouted.

A few minutes later, she stepped up to a wall of gauges and throttled up the engines. Because the engine room was built with a six-foot-tall engineer in mind (DuLong is five feet five), she stood on a wooden crate. She reached down to move her propeller controls in accordance with the pilot's signals. When she had executed a command, she reached up overhead to signal to the pilot—the maneuver looked like a cross between Pilates and rope climbing. She finally signalled "STAND BY," and the Captain signalled back "SLOW AHEAD."

When the boat passed between the Brooklyn and the Manhattan Bridges, the portholes afforded wave-splashed glimpses of the towers and spans, like frames in a silent film. Then the signal came to let the Hudson River in: valves were slowly opened, and the river water could be felt rushing into the onboard pumps. The pumps fired the water through brass guns on the deck. Above deck, total kid euphoria.

Back at Pier 66, as the kids disembarked, soaked and happy, Bob Lenney was in his wheelhouse, where he first started, in 1963. He was full of praise for his engineer. "It's almost instantaneous," he said. "She anticipates what I want. We make a good team."

—*Robert Sullivan*



"It's been taken care of."

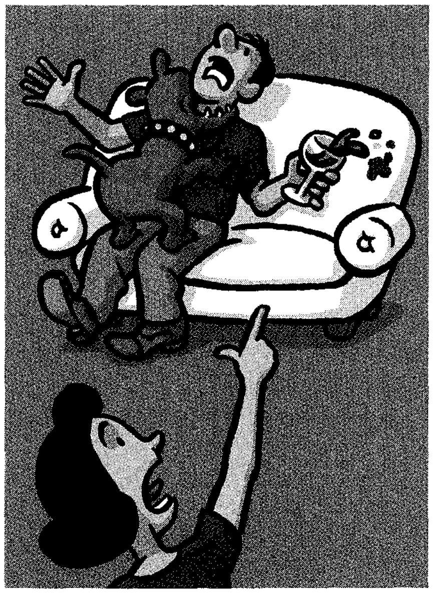
THE FINANCIAL PAGE
INFLATED FEARS

The economy is still limping, job losses are still rising, and consumers are still reluctant to open their wallets. So it's the perfect time to worry about . . . inflation? Apparently so, because, of late, the cries of inflation hawks have grown increasingly loud. Pointing to huge deficit spending, and to the flood of money that the Federal Reserve has sluiced into the economy, they argue that we're at serious risk of "igniting out-of-control inflation" and bringing about the collapse of the dollar. Unless the Fed starts slowing things down, they say, we'll face price jumps that qualify as "hyperinflationary" (a word that Senator Charles Grassley, the Iowa Republican, actually used the other week). Most Americans are worrying about keeping their jobs. Now we have to worry about becoming Zimbabwe, too.

Of course, you can't see any of this inflation in the numbers. The Consumer Price Index fell in July, and, over the past year, prices have actually dropped two per cent. And there's not much sign that inflation is coming down the pike; the price of U.S. inflation-indexed bonds suggests that investors think future inflation will stay low, perhaps around two per cent. So do the remarkably low interest rates on government debt; the U.S. wouldn't be able to borrow money for ten years at less than four per cent if people thought that double-digit inflation was in the offing.

To be sure, both deficit spending and the Fed's recent measures could, in theory, create inflationary pressure. But they haven't, because they've just gone to counteract the sharp decline in consumer and business activity. The government is borrowing more, but consumers and businesses are borrowing less. As for the money the Fed has been pumping through the banks, much of it hasn't actually made it into the economy; banks are keeping hundreds of billions of dollars in reserves on hand. If the definition of inflation is too many dollars chasing too few goods, the too many dollars aren't out there. In the real economy, meanwhile, worker productivity is tremendously high; wage growth is stagnant; and there's still an enormous amount of slack—capacity that's not being used and people who don't have jobs. All of these things will put a lid on price pressures for some time to come.

Then why are people afraid that inflation is about to get out of control? Because they're always afraid that inflation is about to get out of control. Indeed, many of those arguing today that the Fed should place the threat of inflation front and center were saying the exact same thing last year—in the middle of a recession. To be fair, last year there actually was inflation, thanks mainly to skyrocketing commodity prices (notably, oil and food). But the core inflation rate remained relatively low, and throughout the spring and summer of 2008 the U.S. economy was losing hundreds of thousands of jobs a month, while consumers were cutting back on spending and banks on lending. Yet inflation hawks inside and outside the Fed insisted that inflation was as much a danger as recession, and called on the Fed to raise interest rates—generally not what you want to do when the economy is tanking. All this clamor had an effect: between April and October of 2008, while the recession deepened, the Fed failed to cut interest rates, and rumors about the possibility of interest-rate hikes made businesses more cautious and encouraged consumers to hunker down and hold on to their cash. And the Fed wasn't even the worst offender in this regard—the European Central Bank raised interest rates in July, 2008, just as the world economic meltdown was beginning.



Of course, looking tough on inflation is part of any central banker's job description: if investors believe that inflation is going to get out of control, you end up with higher interest rates and capital flight, and a vicious circle quickly ensues. Nonetheless, there's something peculiar about how powerful fears of inflation are. In the past ninety years, the U.S. has had only one sustained bout with high inflation—in the seventies. That track record should engender some faith that central bankers are going to be responsible, and that a healthy industrial economy isn't prone to regular inflationary spirals. It hasn't. Instead, we're always about to relive 1974 all over again, which is why last year, as oil prices rose, we were bombarded with references to "stagflation." In a way, there's something profoundly puritanical, in the original sense of that word, about the inflation hawks: we are always on the verge of sinning, always about to succumb to our worst impulses. Even the rhetoric of inflation—the "debasement" of the currency—carries a moralistic tinge.

This isn't to say that cheap money is always good—it has a nasty habit, for one thing, of starting asset bubbles. So, as Ben Bernanke, the Fed chairman, told Congress in July, once the economy starts growing again the Fed will have to start pulling money back out. But, in any balancing of the current threats to the economy, the danger of stagnation trumps the danger of inflation. Even if we are on the brink of recovery, the last thing we need is for the Fed or the federal government to start embracing a tight-money policy. To do so would risk a reprise of 1937, when, with the economy bouncing back from the depths of the Great Depression, the Fed tightened monetary policy and the government raised taxes, provoking a disastrous downturn that lasted until the Second World War. The Fed does have to make sure that the economy doesn't go careering off the road. But let's wait until the car is actually moving forward before we worry about applying the brakes.

—*James Surowiecki*

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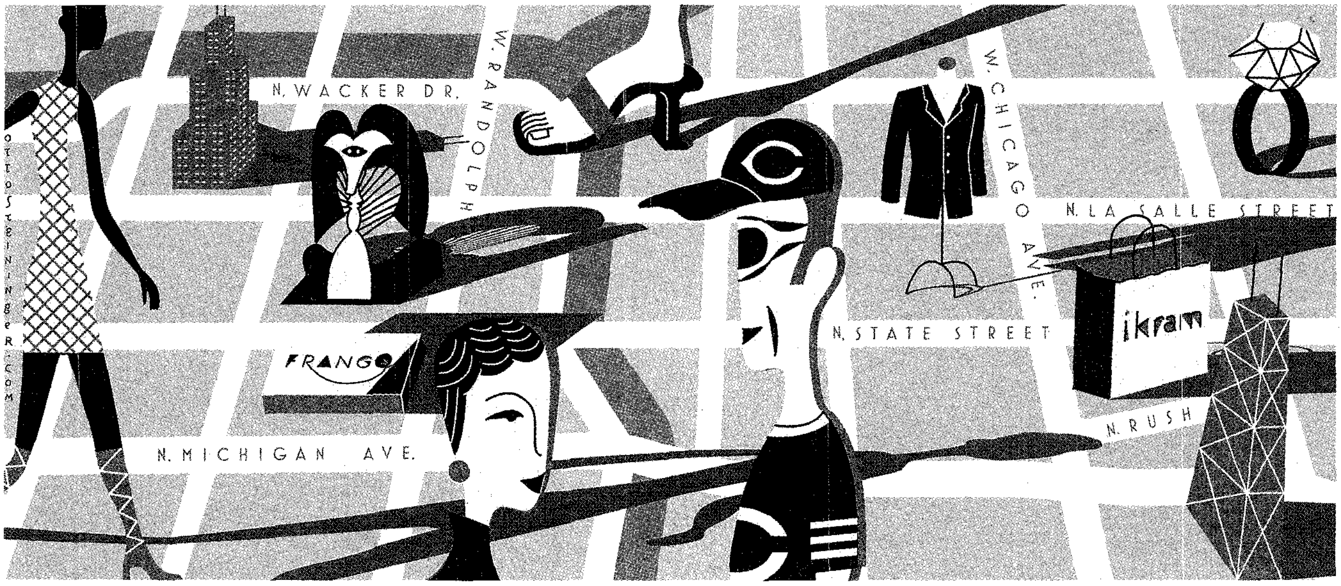
ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

CHICAGO STYLE

What can you buy in the Obamas' home town?

BY PATRICIA MARX



If Chicago had to fill out a questionnaire about itself, would it check male or female? It's a guy's town. But not a slobby guy.

OTTO STEININGER

A New Yorker goes to Chicago with her high hat on. Too inland, too friendly, the kind of place your accountant's best friend comes from and where soybean futures are traded, she thinks. The big city that isn't. Of course, everything she knows about the place comes from changing planes at O'Hare: it has too much weather; it's too hublike (the congested gateway to where she really wants to go); and there's too much deep-dish pizza.

"It's the city that gets some sleep," a Manhattanite who grew up in Chicago tells her, hearing that she's planning a trip. Another New Yorker e-mails, "My uncle used to say it was two Newarks put together, plus a Camden." Even a New Jerseyite has the audacity to sneer: "It's the miniature-golf version of New York, with Oprah standing in for the Statue of Liberty." Hogwash? Chicago may be the Second City—a derogation dreamed up in these pages almost sixty years ago by A. J. Liebling—but it did have the first skyscraper (the Home Insurance Building, 1885); the first comprehensive mail-order business (Montgomery Ward, 1872); the first interracial hospital (1891); the first Shredded Wheat, Cracker Jack, Juicy Fruit gum, zipper, and Ferris wheel (all introduced at the 1893 World's Fair); the first Lincoln Logs (invented in 1916 by the son of Frank Lloyd Wright); the first modern planetarium outside Europe (1930); and the first football team to practice daily and to broadcast games over the radio (the Bears). Oh, yes, the Second City gave us the First Family, too.

Chicago is also the major U.S. city with the highest total sales tax, having last year jumped ahead of Memphis, Tennessee. But let's not allow 10.25 per cent to dampen our shopping spirits.

In the beginning there was Marshall Field & Company, a drygoods concern that grew to be thirty-six acres of everything money could buy (111 North State Street). Field, a merchandiser alert to the sensitivities of the customer, instituted the practices of in-store restaurant dining, bridal registries, unconditional refunds, and the one-price system that abolished charging whatever a clerk could get away with. The beloved establishment, with its Tiffany dome ceiling made up of a million six hundred thousand bits of iridescent glass, was sold to Macy's in 2005. Chicago has been in mourning ever since. How can one not grieve for an emporium—Field refused to call it a department store—whose slogan was "Give the lady what she wants"? "All of us are ticked off that they took over," said a Chicago matron who will now walk through the place only as a shortcut to duck the rain. She told me a story about a set of Marshall Field's bed linens that her mother had received as a wedding present in 1919 and never used, because no occasion ever seemed special enough. Twenty-seven years later, Field allowed her to return the bedding for store credit. (In July, Field loyalists got a boost when one-pound boxes of Frango Mints, the popular chocolates sold exclusively by the store since 1929, started being manufactured in Chicago again, after ten years of protest by regular customers, who were angry that the candy was being made in Pennsylvania; $19.)

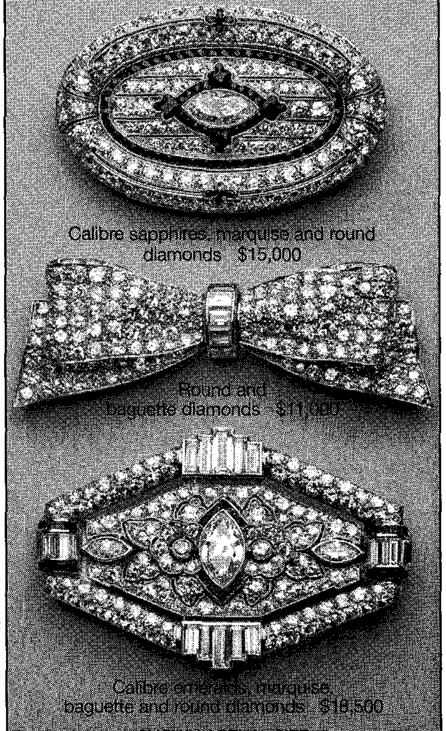
People in Chicago like to insist that their city is not any colder than New York. Really? Here are the average temperatures for New York in December, January, and February: 37.3°, 32.1°, 34.6°. Here are the corresponding numbers for Chicago: 27.4°, 22°, 27°. You need a hat, and I know which one. It's a gray mohair affair—a collapsed chef's hat in wool, from which a tangle of knitted dreadlocks hang down the wearer's back ($200). You can find it, along with lots of indoor clothes—for instance, jeans with silver duct-tape trim ($295)—at Gamma Player, a cubbyhole of a place, painted black, which sells apparel from Japan, Germany, Sweden, and Serbia (2035 West Division Street). The store is owned by Jeff Mills, a techno d.j., and his wife, Yoko Uozumi. She keeps shop while he tours the world, performing and scouting for inventory. If you buy a Rozalia Scartissue T-shirt ($90; Scartissue is a Japanese designer, not a result of injury), it comes with a Jeff Mills CD.

Chicago has its own mayor-appointed fashion director, or fashion czar, and her name is Melissa Gamble. When I asked Gamble, who is a former lawyer, for a word that best described the local style, she said, "Wearable." She pointed out that Tommy Hilfiger had used the same description when he was in town recently, as the official "master designer" during Chicago's fashion week. Marilyn Blaszka, who, with her husband, Dominic Marcheschi, runs a discriminatingly avant-garde boutique called Blake, agrees. "People in Chicago are fashion-conscious, but they are not driven to have the latest hot thing no matter what," Blaszka said. "You wouldn't say, 'It's a great coat—it won't keep me warm, but I'll get it.' You wouldn't buy shoes you couldn't walk in. There's a Midwestern groundedness here." Blake (212 West Chicago Avenue) is in a Federal-style former post office with no signage to indicate that it is no longer a place for buying stamps. Don't expect blandness, though. For twenty years, Blake's proprietors have been on the lookout for innovative clothes. There's much here to recommend: a Tramando halter top crafted from what look like hair bands, with the occasional crystal peeping through ($3,100); a black tunic by Gabriel Colangelo that has a front panel of astrakhan ($2,215); a black jersey sculptural frock made by SWM, a designer who shapes her clothes by draping and tucking the fabric on her own body ($1,520); and a Dries Van Noten crocheted metal-beaded arm cuff ($750). Dries Van Noten fans take note: Blake has the country's largest collection of the Belgian designer's clothes and accessories.

There are many who will tell you that Joan Weinstein was the Johnny Appleseed of Chicago retail. In 1969, Weinstein and her husband, Jerry, opened a store called Ultimo, and until Joan retired, in 1998, she made it the city's "It" boutique. That many of today's professional arbiters of taste worked either for or with her is no coincidence.

"I *love* Joan Weinstein," Isaac Mizrahi told me. He peddled his clothes to Ultimo in 1987, when he was just starting out. "She was the real thing. She used to go around in black pants and a Sonia Rykiel black marabou-feather coat. She was a secretary for Mies van der Rohe in the fifties, I think, and had the coolest house. She trained all her salespeople. They'd say, 'You *don't* wear the belt that comes with the dress. Buy the Barry Kieselstein-Cord belt.'" Weinstein held trunk shows for Mizrahi two or three times a year. "Joan had all those crazy ladies buying clothes like drunken sailors," he went on. "In Chicago people are at ease with looking glamorous. You'd tell a customer, 'Shorten that skirt.' They'd say, 'O.K.' In New York they'd say, 'Really? You think?' In Chicago you don't have that nightmare of insecurities. The ladies loved me, and I loved them. I will always love Chicago because of that." Ultimo is still around (at 116 East Oak Street), under new management, and although locals no longer consider it to be as strong a fashion force, there's plenty here to like. For instance, a Mizrahi hot-pink leather duffel with a waterproof covering that can be pulled over the bag in case of rain ($995), an aluminum-hued Stella McCartney bomber jacket ($995), and a tiger-print Peter Som mink bolero ($2,415).

Weinstein's most famous former sales associate is Ikram Goldman, the key fashion adviser to you-know-who in the White House. The boutique she opened in 2001, called Ikram (873 North Rush Street), is a medium-sized space—about four thousand square feet, if you really want to be real estatey, but easily enclosing enough apparel, shoes, handbags, and jewelry to fill six thousand square feet. The décor is welcoming and elegant: carved Oriental screens, Murano glass chandeliers that could be translucently gilded Frisbees, vaulted crannies showcasing Junya Watanabe cashmere and Azzedine Alaia platforms on floating perches, and, in imitation of



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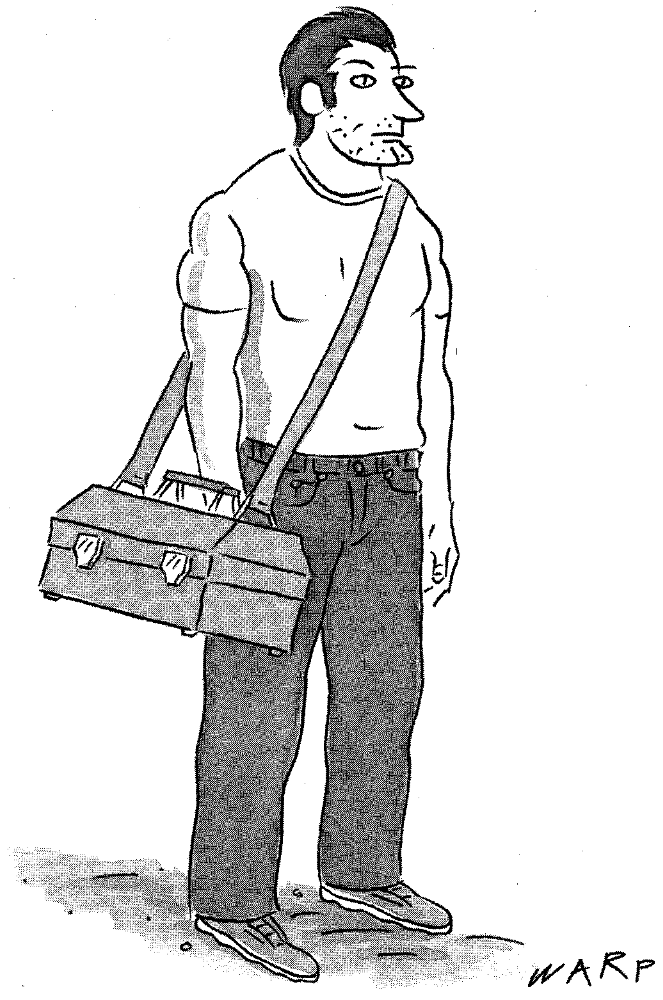
Joan Weinstein's Ultimo, a comfortable communal decision-making rotunda, which adjoins the fitting rooms and is walled with full-length mirrors. And the goods on goods? They are very good. I coveted a silver lamé crinkly pleated skirt that juts out stiffly like a paper parasol on a piña colada (comes in gold, too; $645). Also, a crisp coat, made of gray acetate foam, that resembles a Louis Kahn façade ($1,145). "Wouldn't Mary Tyler Moore wear this?" a perky sales associate named Shane Petyko asked, holding up a simply cut moss-green jacket by Rochas; Petyco said it was made from Teddy-bear fabric, but it was, in fact, felted wool ($1,285). Yes, Mary would, and so would I.

Jesse Garza is a New York stylist who worked as an Ultimo sales associate from 1985 to 1995. "Chicago used to be a greigey-beigey town," he told me, by way of explaining why Armani, a label known for its neutral palette and for silhouettes as straight and unfussy as the Willis Tower, has done well here. In 1975 at Ultimo, Joan Weinstein carried the designer's first collection. In 2000, Armani Exchange (A/X) came to town (520 North Michigan Avenue), after company executives noticed that fifteen to twenty per cent of its Web sales had been shipped to Chicago Zip Codes. For this fall, a manager of the Chicago A/X store recommends the denim leggings ($48) and a form-fitting black leather jacket for women ($350), and, for men, the slim jeans ($125-$135) and a gray denim jacket ($145).

Another Ultimo alumnus, John Jones, co-founded George Greene, a modishly urbane shop for gentlemen (49 East Oak Street). "There's been a demise over the past many years of the specialty store," Jones said. "It's happened everywhere, but in New York it was earlier and quicker than in Chicago. Here customers are loyal to stores and to salespeople. At George Greene, we have forty-year-old relationships with our clients. We have the same tailor that we had at Ultimo. In fact, I think a lot of customers come for Oscar—it's very important for a man to have confidence in his tailor." George Greene carries the largest selection of the Italian label Kiton (gray suit with pale-blue pinstripes; $6,270), as well as more out-there stuff, like a Chrome Hearts black leather Cemetery Vest, with subtly stitched patterns of crosses ($4,730), and a Lanvin white evening shirt with a black beaded detachable collar ($785).



The He-Man Bag

Maria Pinto, a designer favored by Michelle Obama (she wore Pinto's purple sheath dress and belt the night her husband accepted the nomination), didn't work at Ultimo, but Joan Weinstein bought Pinto's first collection for the store, back in 1991. "I'm a maniac for fabric," Pinto told me, and proved it by showing me some of her smartly tailored creations: a pleated "warrior wrap" in black taffeta ($980), an evening dress confected from mohair tulle netting onto which tiny beads have been embroidered ($3,835), and, my favorite, the short and swingy turquoise Lola coat in an especially hirsute alpaca ($2,815). Pinto's gallerylike shop (Maria Pinto, 135 North Jefferson Street) is in the Fulton River District, an area of town that she said is the equivalent of New York's meatpacking district, pre-boutiqueification. Then again the Chicago Architecture Foundation map divides the city into two hundred and thirty-seven neighborhoods, and if I had a Chicago-cut rib eye for every one that was described to me by a hopeful resident as "the next meatpacking district" I'd be dead of a coronary. (The large neighborhood map is $50, at www.architecture.org.)

If Chicago had to fill out a questionnaire about itself, would it check male or female? Male: big shoulders, conventioneers, the blues (the blues are just male—I can't explain), Al Capone, toddlin' (come on, you know why they're toddlin'), commodities, all those Daleys, red meat, sports. Female: twenty-eight sister cities, five hundred and fifty-two

HOULDN'T YOU BE HERE TOO

parks, flowers planted all over the place. Hermaphrodite: finalist for the 2016 Olympics, with the slogan "Let Friendship Shine" (the original slogan, "Stir the Soul," was discarded because it translates in too many languages as "Stir Your Insides"). So it's a guy town. But not a slobby guy.

Wherever you go, Chicago seems to be spic and span. Residents keep their trash cans in back alleys, not on the street. And, thanks to Victor Skrebneski, the fashion photographer, there are no splotches of flattened chewing gum on the sidewalks. At least, not in the vicinity of the Water Tower, an 1869 Gothic landmark that Skrebneski helped to restore. "I'll call Bobby Cannatello," Skrebneski told me, referring to the chief operating engineer for the pumping station, "and say, 'Bobby, black polka dots!' And in about three minutes they're gone." (Incidentally, Chicago's own Wrigley company is developing a chewing gum that delivers a dose of the generic chemical in Viagra. Told you it was a guy town.)

At the beginning of my visit, Julie Winship, a Chicagoan who frequently travels east, told me, "In New York, you'll be having dinner outside at some bistro near piles of trash, and you'll feel the subway underneath, and you won't be able to hear, because of the traffic, and, meanwhile, the water from an air-conditioner will drip on you, and still you'll say, 'But at least we're outside!' " For some reason, that really made me homesick.

If your name begins with "O," are you ever in luck. At the Oprah Store (37 North Carpenter Street), your monogram is ubiquitous. There are "O" T-shirts ($12-$24), "O"-embossed stoneware dessert plates (four for $43, on sale), "O"-patterned beach towels in pink and orange ($10, reduced from $20), "O" pajamas ($42 for the bottoms, $36 for the tops), and O, so much more. What's your dress size? Hey, that used to be Oprah's size! In the nook called Oprah's Closet you can buy her hand-me-downs, sizes 8 to 16. Hanging in the armoire when I visited: a jaunty Charles Nolan floral knee-length skirt, size 10 ($220); a taffeta Vera Wang gown, size 14 ($325); and a long cream-colored Armani silk dress with side slit, size 12 ($275). Proceeds from Oprah's Closet go to her Angel Network charity. Handicrafts from South Africa are also available—handsome throws ($94), stylish glass-beaded bowls that look like overturned straw hats ($118), and geometrically patterned grass baskets ($94-$168).

Here's why I'm trusting Obama on health care: he used to live a kidney stone's throw away from the International Museum of Surgical Science (1524 North Lake Shore Drive). There the President might have seen an iron lung, or a speculum used in ancient Rome, and then visited the delightfully off-the-wall gift shop. Isn't there someone you want to give an Ebola virus to? The plush microbial toys also come in versions harmlessly resembling the common cold, athlete's foot, a fat cell, and a pandemic of nasty bacteria ($8). The diagrams on bone socks and muscle socks are anatomically correct, and both have reflexology charts on their soles ($15). Double-helix temporary tattoos are only fifty cents; a hypodermic-needle pen is five dollars.

Primitive (130 North Jefferson Street) is the largest I-don't-know-what that I have ever come across. The best way to describe the contents of its five sprawling floors would be to borrow the words of Julian Street in trying to convey a sense of Marshall Field & Company in his 1914 book "Abroad at Home": "a phantasmagoria of things with which civilization has encumbered the human race." The things, according to the store's owner, Glen Joffe, are museum-grade objects from a hundred and fifty cultures, all acquired by him and his wife, Claudia Morgan, on their numerous world travels (documented on their blog on the store's Web site). Except for the things they produce themselves. Joffe explained (sort of): "Do we produce or do we buy? One hundred per cent of both. Are we style setters? Yes. Are we trend setters? Yes. But nobody lives in a vacuum." The thirty-one thousand square feet of artifacts include a seven-foot-high accordion-folded Burmese fortune-teller's manual; an opium bed; six pillars from Ahmadabad, India; medicine bowls from Nigeria; sea-amber beads from the Guinea coast; a Mushambwooy dance mask from the Kuba kingdom, in present-day Congo; a gold-threaded Torah cover from Fez dated 5118 (that's 1357-78 for all you non-New Yorkers); a wedding sedan chair from China ("If I had a little girl, she could use this as a phone booth," Joffe said); an eighteenth-century Chinese incense table (Joffe says that a table inspired by it is in the foyer of the Obamas' Chicago house); a Pygmy bed from the Congo; hand-painted Ghanaian movie posters; vintage kimonos cut up by the staff and refashioned into pillows; and store-designed Swarovski-crystal evening bags in the shape of Jimi Hendrix's head (prices range from $10 for a single amber bead to $28,000 for the opium bed). Shoppers can fill out a self-addressed wish card, which Joffe promises to hand-deliver to a high lama in Nepal for blessing.

Richard Wright's auction house is in a large, really large, building that previously functioned as a printing house (1440 West Hubbard Street). "I feel the physical manifestation of my business is this building," Wright told me as we toured the repository of collectibles, which he sells in online auctions, among them a sculpture, circa 1975, of a sheep with a sheepskin torso, "after François-Xavier Lalanne" ($4,500). He continued, "To have this space—to do things on this scale—is Midwestern. Sure, we want to make money, but we don't have to be overtly commercial all the time, because there isn't as much financial pressure. We can be experimental. I couldn't do this in New York." In the Modern Design auction to be held October 6th, you can bid online on a curvy teak 1953 Hans Wegner valet chair, cleverly contrived to hold a man's suit: hang your jacket on the hanger-shaped back, and lift the seat, which becomes a rail on which to hang your trousers; then stash the contents of your pockets in the space below the seat (wright20.com; estimate, $10,000-$15,000).

The contiguous neighborhoods of Wicker Park and Bucktown (so called because of the goats supposedly raised there in the early eighteen-hundreds) ooze with gentrified grooviness. When I asked Robin Richman, of the Robin Richman boutique (2108 North Damen Avenue), to describe her shop's aesthetic, she pointed to her consider-

SEMINAR

I carry America into these young heads,
at least some parts that haven't yet got there—
Hawthorne's Salem, Ellison's blacks and reds,
Bishop's lovely lines of late summer air.

The students take quick notes. They pause or dive
for dictionaries and laptops, or turn to ask
a friend as new words constantly arrive.
The more they do, the more complex the task.

They smoothly move from serious to blasé
and back again. I love the way they sit
and use their bodies to nuance what they say.
I lean forward to catch the drift of it.

When it's ended, they'll switch back to Czech,
put on their coats and bags, shift wood and chrome,
and ready themselves for their daily trek
across a continent and ocean home.

—*Justin Quinn*

ably tattooed store manager, who was wearing a vintage circus costume that Richman had given her—a black-and-cream cotton jumpsuit with an orange necktie. "We're not into names like Prada," Richman said. Duh. A boiled-wool tunic that can be twisted and turned and worn in a variety of ways was made by a company called Complex Geometries, whose clothes require a wearer with an I.Q. higher than mine ($205). A local designer named Ryan Davies, who goes by the name Sophisticated Science, makes attractive necklaces from circles cut out of wooden doors ($190).

Stephen Naparstek named his Wicker Park boutique Bonnie & Clyde's (1751 West Division Street), after a nineteen-eighties punk-rock shop in Stamford, Connecticut, that he used to fantasize about when he was growing up nearby. "I'd never been there, but my older brother would go all the time and tell me about it," he said. The hodgepodge of art, accessories, and clothes for men and women is arresting. My favorite items were a black leather jacket from Junker, with grommets and assorted decals, that had been hole-punched, sanded, shredded, left to rust, and temporarily buried in the ground by a person whose job title at the designer's studio is "the destroyer" ($1,540); a sheer gray Christian Siriano trenchcoat dress with orange piping and clear buttons ($1,700); and fantastic stuffed animals by Jo-Jo Baby ($200-$500), including one that looks like Felix the Cat's strung-out cousin, with mismatched taxidermy eyes and claws made from forks. A leather handbag called Guardian Angel ($495) is embossed with a visible outline of a pistol and comes with instructions cautioning the buyer not to carry it in a bank or through airport security. I think it would be just the thing to insure that you don't get picked for jury duty.

I asked June Blaker, who, years ago, in her boutique City introduced Chicago to Comme des Garçons and other Japanese designers, whether she'd ever thought about starting a business in New York. "It's easier to be on top of the pile here," she said. These days, she has a namesake shop that sells winsome curios (June Blaker, 870 North Orleans Street): a ruler that, when tilted to and fro, displays an animation of a piano keyboard with hands tapping out a tune ($7); antique-seeming trays with digitally altered photographs of, say, a zebra dressed in Victorian clothes, sitting with a bouquet of roses in its hooves ($225); a rubber-coated white metal stool that looks as if it were dripping paint onto the floor ($365). Be sure to ask to see the ambient-lighting display that casts a convincing shadow of your choice onto the wall—a window, a shutter, a tree. The projector is kept in the shop's bathroom, where it is sufficiently dark. (A kit including slides of a tree and of a window sells for $450.)

What else is for sale in Chicago? Want the Senate seat that Barack Obama left vacant when he took that job in Washington? Oh, wait, it's off the market. The seller, Rod Blagojevich, was impeached. Is Chicago really more corrupt than other cities? Nicholas von Hoffman, who is writing a book about the Chicago community organizer Saul Alinsky, thinks not. "One reason Chicago has a reputation for being particularly corrupt is that the corruption there is more democratic. The money is filtered out into small hands and spread around a lot via the patronage system." He continued, "One difference between Illinois and New York, though, is that in Illinois they put crooks in jail, and they never do in New York."

"Chicago is the only city where I have two boutiques," Cynthia Rowley said (810 West Armitage Avenue and 1653 North Damen). She is sentimental about her home town. Her fall collection has terrific legwear embellished with beading and embroidery ($250) and baggy boots that would look good with anything ($585). Rowley was discovered on the El by a Marshall Field's buyer who admired her homemade jacket and invited her to the office to present her collection. "So I sewed all weekend," Rowley told me. "When I showed her the clothes, she asked about certain style numbers. I said, 'Uh, this is one, and the other is two.'" Rowley had one of her first fashion shows in the eighties on the deck of a boat on the Chicago River. "It was a disaster," she said of the pirate-themed event. "The changing room blew overboard, the models were seasick, and the guests got drunker and drunker. But you could get away with things like that in Chicago. The community supports you. That's what gave me the courage and confidence to go to New York, where I knew I would have my ass whipped." ♦

SHOUTS & MURMURS

EASY COCKTAILS FROM THE CURSING MOMMY

BY IAN FRAZIER

Those high-priced bartenders in their red vests and white shirts who your caterers recommended to serve at your last party may know a thing or two, but for entertaining on a smaller scale—for parties of seven people, four, or even just one—a few simple steps to the perfect cocktail are all you'll ever need. Take, for example, this drink I'm drinking right now. Where the hell did I put it? I just set it down five minutes ago. I had it when I was watching the news, I know that. Now what in hell could I have done with it? O.K.—I found it, thank heavens. I must have set it here on the stairs when I went to throw away the mail. Anyway, as I was saying, making this particular drink, which happens to be a vodka gimlet, is simplicity itself, once you know how.

Plus, it's so delicious! The tangy tartness of the lime juice combined with the antiseptic astringency of the icy-cold vodka—wonderful. Now, normally in this column the Cursing Mommy does not endorse any company, product, or institution, but just this once I'm going to make an exception, because, what the hell—I use Rose's Lime Juice. It's perfect for gimlets, so I always keep a few extra bottles in reserve in case I run out, as in fact I did just a few minutes ago when I mixed the drink I'm finishing now. The backup bottles, which are down here on the bottom shelf of the liquor cabinet—don't tell me they're not here. Please don't fucking tell me the Rose's Lime Juice is not fucking here.

If Larry took my last spare bottle to use in his fucking Sno-Kone machine, by Christ, I swear I'll—oh, thank God. Here it is, back behind the Kahlúa and the walnut liqueur. Whew. That was a close one.

Anyway, you take your Rose's Lime Juice, you take your favorite gimlet glass (which, for me, is the one I was just using), and—fuck. I have lost my drink again. Somebody please tell me I have not lost my stupid goddam fucking *drink* again! O.K., it has to be close by, because I had it right before I was hunting around on all fours in front of the liquor cabinet. Wait a minute—can this be it? Here on the counter behind the flour cannister? I don't think this is it. I'll just take a sip and—*Phewww!! Gahhh! Disgusting!* This must be the drink I couldn't find night before last. Fucking ants in it. Drowned ants. Good Christ, what was I thinking?

O.K., we have established that that was definitely not the glass I was looking for. In situations like this, the Cursing Mommy recommends that you take three deep breaths, concentrate inwardly on some attractive and relaxing vacation scene, and scream "Fuck!" at the top of your lungs. There—I feel better. Don't you?

Usually at about this time of the evening I must begin making dinner. Larry and the kids will be home soon. Fortunately, however, tonight is Make Your Own Goddam Dinner Night, a recently instituted family ritual I shared with you in last week's column. So basically I don't have to worry about that. Instead, what I'm going to do is just close my eyes, wait until I regain a sense of calm, and when I open them again my missing gimlet glass is going to be right in front of me.

Oh, fucking hell. Could I possibly have left it down in the basement? Of course not—that's ridiculous. I haven't even been down in the basement, not since I vowed I wouldn't touch another piece of laundry today even if it meant the clothes already in the washer mildewed and rotted away. Regular followers of this column know that at about this point every week the Cursing Mommy flips out due to one problem or another and begins cursing a lot, throwing things, and giving people the finger. Somehow, however, I don't think it's quite appropriate to go to those extremes over a problem as minor as a misplaced cocktail glass. Instead, I will begin a systematic search, accompanying myself meanwhile with a sort of general, all-around cursing out of various deserving individuals and things.

For starters, God damn to hell my father's fucking girlfriend, who expects me to do all the food and the cleanup at his seventy-fifth birthday party, and then she'll take all the credit for herself, such a fucking jerk. Fuck the township, also, for changing fucking Bulky Waste Day from Monday to Friday and now I have to haul all that shit that I carried down this morning back up from the curb or they're going to give us a ticket, the fucking bureaucratic red-tape, petty, time-server assholes. And, just in passing, fuck the fucking Bush Administration—I know they're not in power anymore, but fuck them anyway, because they're such a bunch of fucks. And on the subject of stupid fucks, fuck the—

FUUUUUUUCK! OW! JESUS CHRIST! FUCKING SHIT! I STUBBED MY FUCKING TOE! OW OW OW! JESUS! FUCKING LARRY LEFT THAT FUCKING BOX OF ADAPTERS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FUCKING DINING-ROOM FLOOR, THE FUCKING IDIOT! WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT STUPID FUCKING BOX DOING THERE! I TOLD HIM TO PUT THOSE FUCKING ADAPTERS AWAY! FUCK! OW! FUCK!

(*Pause.*)

People say that when you misplace an object in your home, instead of tearing the place apart looking for it, you should just be patient, and the object you are looking for will eventually turn up. And now we see the accuracy of this saying, because as I sit here on the dining-room floor cursing and massaging my goddam stubbed toe, I notice that over there on the floor, just behind the door to the kitchen, is the stupid fucking cocktail glass I was looking for. And, thanks be to merciful God, there is still a fair amount of drink remaining in it, so I'll down it now. What a fucking terrible day this has been.

Next week the Cursing Mommy will show you how to put up the decorations for a child's birthday party all by yourself with no help from your fucking husband. Watch for her column, entitled, "God Damn This Tape Dispenser to Hell: Party Decorating Tips from the Cursing Mommy." ♦

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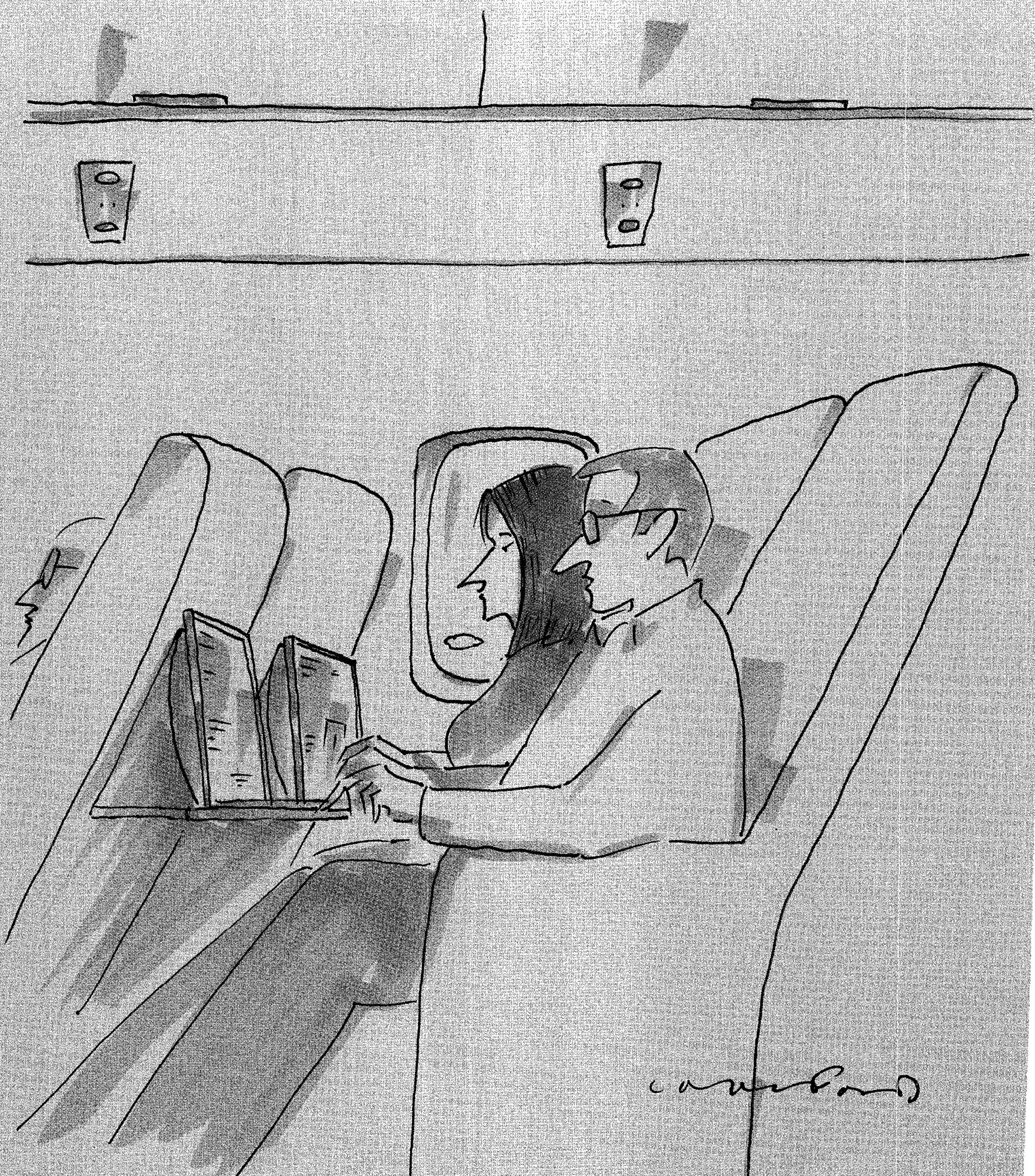

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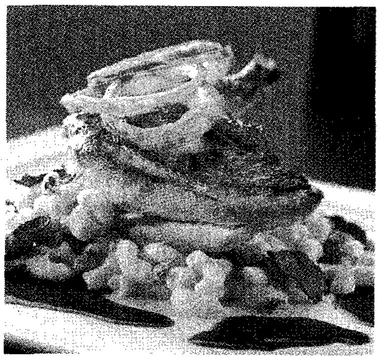

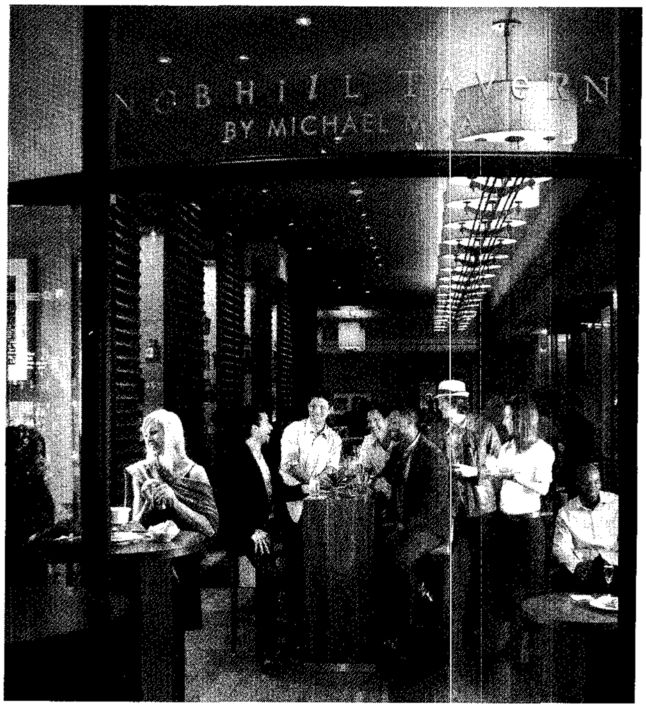

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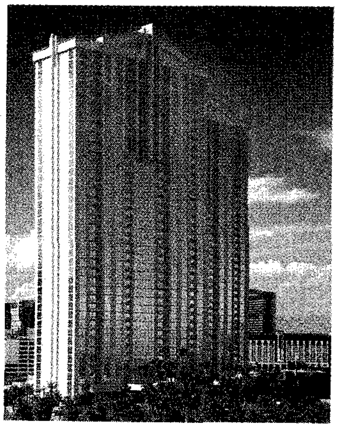

TO DINE...OR TO FEAST?

Given the many dining options at MGM Grand, using the suite's gourmet kitchen may not be necessary. In the latest edition, the *Michelin* guide once again gave its highest rating, three stars, to Joël Robuchon at MGM Grand, about which it said, "Prepare to be dazzled with culinary genius so lovingly crafted it wows the senses." Other dining destinations include Wolfgang Puck's California-inspired cuisine and Emeril Lagasse's signature blend of Creole-Cajun specialties. Craftsteak, by Chef Tom Colicchio, offers mainstays like Kobe beef along with veal, salmon, and lobster dishes prepared with the purest ingredients from small family farms. SEABLUE, by Michael Mina, is inspired by the bustling ports and marketplaces of the Mediterranean and is noted for its two open kitchens, which prepare seafood over wood-fired grills. Nobhill Tavern, also by Mina, has a popular bar and lounge that captures the look and feel of a top-flight San Francisco eatery. Still more restaurants include the sleek FIAMMA Trattoria & Bar, and Pearl, which serves cuisine inspired by Canton and Shanghai.

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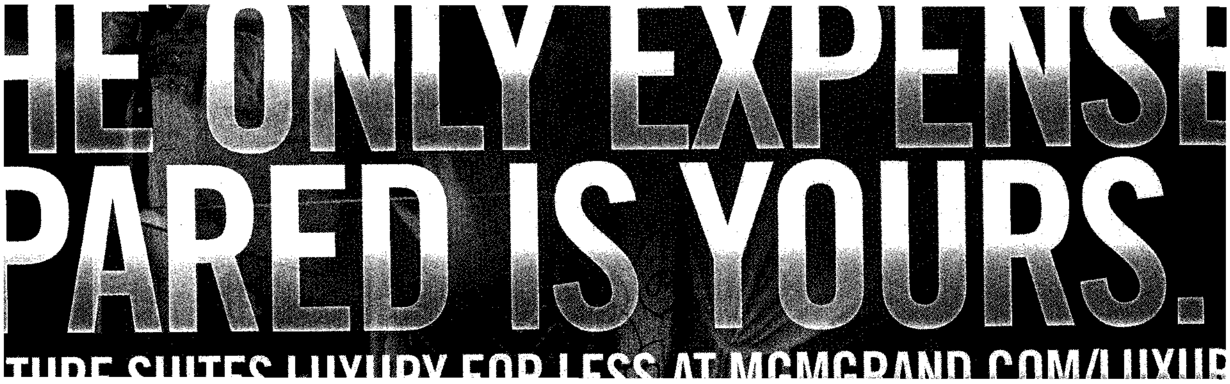
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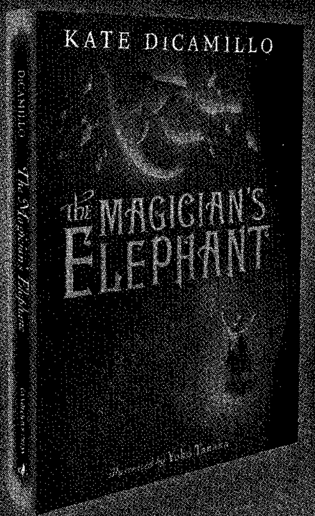

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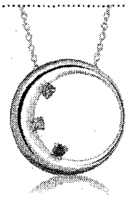

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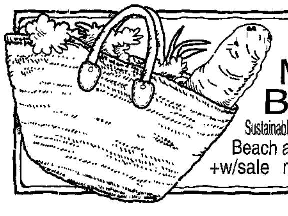

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LETTER FROM LOS ANGELES

LADY OF THE HOUSE

Kelly Wearstler's maximal style.

BY DANA GOODYEAR

Kelly Wearstler, the presiding grande dame of West Coast interior design, is a celebrity decorator, in that she herself is a celebrity. She is forty-two, petite and beautiful, with lynxlike green eyes and long chestnut-colored hair, and an outré fashion sense that accommodates the wearing of crinolines, beehive hairdos, and fingerless gloves. To a party that Wearstler (pronounced "Worst-ler") co-hosted at Chateau Marmont in June, she wore a vintage dress with sea-green polka dots, backward. Her movements are chronicled exhaustively on real-estate and fashion blogs, where she is known as the "hair crimping queen," "kooky Los Angeles interior designer extraordinaire," or, simply, "the Wearst." In 2007 and 2008, she served as a judge on "Top Design," a reality show on Bravo (tagline: "See ya later, decorator"); most people, including her fellow-judge Jonathan Adler, say they watched just for Wearstler's getups. After an episode in the second season when she appeared, like a California Raisin, in a thigh-grazing purple ruffled dress and a green silk turban, with purple ankle socks and green pumps, one of the authors of the fashion-watchdog blog Go Fug Yourself posted, "I kept expecting her to grab someone's palm and be like, 'I see a trip over water . . . a mysterious, dark-haired man . . . a paddle ball tournament . . . and an incident with Baked Alaska.' "

In contrast to the great ladies of interiors in generations past, Wearstler issues dictums—in a pinched, South Carolina twang—that are as unassuming as a teen-age girl's. Things she likes she deems "edgy," "cool," "sexy," or "sophisticated." What she doesn't like she dismisses with a quick "Oh, God no." Her choices are governed by instinct rather than by intellect. "I don't have time to think things through a lot," she says. "I just do how it feels." Her smile—insouciant, good-humored, faintly ironical—is always on the verge of suggesting that she's not altogether serious.

Wearstler represents the uninhibited side of Los Angeles, the part that celebrates how far the city is from strict East Coast notions of good taste. (A local interior decorator calls Wearstler's aesthetic "anti-taste.") In a decadelong career, her style has evolved from mid-century modern to glammed-up Hollywood Regency to an ornate, layered look inspired in part by the late Hollywood set decorator and interior designer Tony Duquette. She uses intense colors, David Hicks-like graphic patterning, and contrasting textures (lacquer, parchment, shagreen). Her preferred scale is oversized: one of her signature pieces is a capacious chair, hooded like an upended pram and available in leather the color of blue Wedgwood china, which she sells for eighteen thousand five hundred dollars at her retail shop, in the home-furnishings department of Bergdorf Goodman, in New York. But Wearstler is best known for the palm-belt hotels she has designed for the Kor Group, a large real-estate and hotel-management company owned by her husband, Brad Korzen, who is also small and good-looking—"sexy little Halflings," one design critic calls them. Wearstler and Korzen's collaborations include the Avalon and Maison 140, a pair of boutique hotels in Beverly Hills; the recently renovated Tides, in South Beach; and the Viceroys, in Santa Monica, Palm Springs, and Miami.

Lately, Wearstler has been experimenting with a highly eclectic concatenation of vintage pieces, including swinging-seventies French and Italian furniture, in an early-eighties palette of lavender, mauve, gray, and robin's-egg blue, with brass and nickel. "I think I have a very European sensibility," she says. "It feels well travelled, collected. It's not 'those match and those match and everything feels the same.' " A Kelly Wearstler room, the local interior decorator says, is like an overstimulated child: "You just want to say, 'Quiet, quiet. Settle down.' "

One recent afternoon, Wearstler had a design meeting with Stan and Miriam Rothbart and their daughter, Gabriella, who is twelve. The Rothbarts—Stan, a developer of suburban shopping centers; Miriam, the founder of an independent record label; Gabriella, a member of a band called the Young Rockers—arrived at Wearstler's offices, in a large building that she shares with the hairdresser Sally Hershberger, on La Cienega Boulevard, in West Hollywood. Mother and daughter were dressed identically, in black T-shirts, black leggings, and black boots. Stan was in a button-down and slacks. They gathered around a central island, the surface of which was stacked with "vibe trays" containing moldings, fabric swatches, wallpaper samples, and pieces of marble, each representing a room in the Rothbarts' future home.

Several years ago, while shopping for a place to live, the Rothbarts looked at a house owned by Wearstler and Korzen, which was then on the market. They ended up buying a thirteen-thousand-square-foot Georgian revival on the golf course of the Bel-Air Country Club instead. The house had been decorated twice by the Santa Monica-based decorator Michael Smith—once for Richard Gere and Cindy Crawford, and once for James Burrows, the television director who co-created "Cheers." (Smith, known in design circles as Granny Smith, delivers a settled, reassuring, Anglophilic style favored by the entertainment establishment; he was recently hired by the Obamas to redecorate the private rooms in the White House.) The Rothbarts, as Stan put it, said "Screw it" to the idea of having a traditional interior. "We decided to do something young and edgy and fun, so we went with Kelly," he said. Miriam mentioned that they had recently made a shopping trip with Wearstler to New York. "I don't know how to accessorize like she does," Miriam said. "To get her look, you really have to have her do all of it."

Wearstler arrived a few minutes later, wearing a fitted jacket, slim jeans, and a huge green gumball of a jade ring. They began to talk through finishes, starting with a tiger-striped fuchsia velvet to cover the sofa in the family room. "The irony is, I'm into whites and neutral colors," Stan said.

"That's why we have to sassify some of the other rooms!" Wearstler responded. She showed him a wallpaper sample, a textured metallic pattern, which she wanted to install with the back side facing out. "It's kind of muted, quieter. It'll be so pretty, don'tcha think?" For the entry to Stan's dressing room, she proposed taking black-and-gold striped wallpaper and turning it ninety degrees, so the lines would run horizontally. "That'll give it a po-mo, edgy feel," she said.

They moved over to a marble-topped table next to the island, and Wearstler laid out four options for the dining room. "This is my first choice," she said, pairing a piece of 24k. gold-leaf panelling by the artist Nancy Lorenz and a cowhide splattered with golden paint—an alchemical accident with a bovine casualty. When the Rothbarts expressed concern about the cost of having gold walls, Wearstler reminded them that half the room would be antiqued mirror, and deftly changed the subject. "Since all the movement will be on the walls, I think we should do a beautiful silk carpet, all one color, just for texture," she said. "You guys could get a beautiful piece of modern art, and you'd have the geometric and the organic."

Wearstler suggested that they talk

Wearstler, who likes her rooms "edgy," in her office. Photograph by Jeff Minton.

about the living room. She opened a clear plastic folder and extracted a picture of a silk carpet with a pattern of mauve, mustard, pink, and lavender triangles. "Beautiful," she said encouragingly. "The silk takes it to another level." Stan asked if it would be easy to clean. "Well . . . you don't want it in your mudroom," she said, and smiled winningly. She ran to get a sample.

"You know what happens the first time the dogs go in there," Stan said, when she had gone.

"We'll just keep it locked," Miriam replied.

"There's no door."

"We'll just have to keep them outside. It takes away the whole balance of the room when you take out the rug." Even in her absence, Wearstler was persuasive.

When Wearstler returned with a tiny sample of the rug, Miriam said, "Stan, are you O.K. with the intensity of the repetition?"

"It won't be that raging," Wearstler interjected. She turned to Stan, with a flirty, lightly mocking look. "Everyone's going to be like, 'Whoa, that's so gorgeous, Stan.'" He caved.

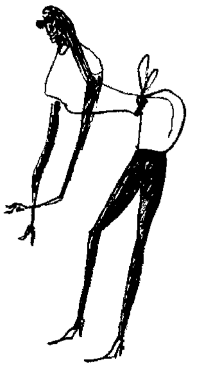
Wearstler grew up in a cluttered house in Myrtle Beach. Her mother, who had her at nineteen and her older sister, Tami, the year before, had dreams of being a designer, and decorated their home in a blowsy provincial style. "She's very Americana, very country, stuff *everywhere*," Wearstler says. "Like, you can't put your toothbrush down on the bathroom vanity, because there's so much stuff there." Her mother and stepfather eventually decamped to Martha's Vineyard, where they ran the Main Street Diner, in Edgartown; now they live in Falmouth. Wearstler paid her own way through school, at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, working as a waitress until eleven at night, and then going to her studio till dawn. She did internships with Cambridge Seven, an architecture and design firm in Boston, and Milton Glaser's graphic-design shop, in New York. Graphic design continues to inform her sensibility, particularly her use of color. "On a little page, you want it to be vibrant and have a voice," she says. "The same is true in a room."

In her mid-twenties, Wearstler moved to Los Angeles, hoping to become a Hollywood set decorator. She found piecemeal work in the art departments of a couple of films, and through that was hired to refurbish a room in a producer's house. Her first exposure as a designer was unconventional. While working as a hostess at Chaya Brasserie, a popular restaurant in Beverly Hills, she met Marilyn Grabowski, the West Coast photography editor for *Playboy*, who invited her to come in for a test. *Playboy* shot her for the September, 1994, centerfold, wearing vintage blue-green velvet lingerie on a neoclassical set. According to Grabowski, Wearstler was different from other Playmates—soft-spoken and reserved, and determined to become an interior decorator. And, Grabowski told me, "she had amazing breasts, amazing *natural* breasts. As you know, that became harder and harder to come by in this country." In a video on the *Playboy* Web site, Wearstler, who used Gallagher, a family last name, for the shoot, cavorts around a room in shorts overalls, mixing colors and painting the walls, and eventually stripping down to nothing. She lists "bad design" among her turnoffs, and, among the things she can't get enough of, "swap meets." Her attitude toward the experience nowadays is lighthearted. "I mean, I took my clothes off—I didn't cheat or steal or anything," she says. "It was a good time, and it was one of the things that enabled me to pay off my student loans and start my business."

In 1996, while she was working as a waitress at a steak house, a co-worker introduced her to Korzen. He was from Chicago, and had moved to Los Angeles during the mid-nineties real-estate downturn. With investment from his father, who owned bowling alleys in Illinois, he and a partner began buying apartment buildings in West Covina and the Inland Empire. Shortly after he and Wearstler met, Korzen hired her to do his house, a Spanish bungalow in the Hollywood Hills, and she filled it with mid-century pieces and Lucite chairs of her own design. (Its sales history is a testament to Wearstler's afterglow: Korzen sold the house, which he had bought for about eight hundred thousand dollars in the late nineties, for $3.925 million in 2002—a record for the neighborhood. Last October, in the midst of the housing crisis, the new owner sold it to the director McG for $5.75 million, again way over market value.) For the Avalon—a hotel built in 1949 that was a dilapidated retirement home when Korzen and his partners acquired it—Wearstler delivered a playful take on mid-century modernism. By the time the hotel opened, in 1999, she and Korzen were in love, and she moved into his house in the hills. The next year, they collaborated on a Georgian-revival

"If it's my pride, I'm not here."

boarding house in Beverly Hills, turning it into Maison 140, a tiny hotel with a louche black-and-red interior and heavy doses of chinoiserie. Simon Doonan, the creative director of Barneys, says he loves to stay there. "I feel like I'm staying with my friend who's a retired stripper, and who married a Chinese owner of a chain of opium dens," he told me.



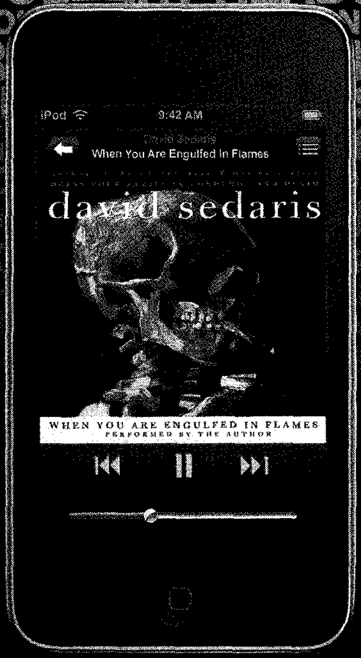
The project that announced Wearstler, and heralded the return of Hollywood Regency, was the Viceroy in Santa Monica, which opened in 2002. Hollywood Regency, a fantastical revival of eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century French and English décor, was imagined by nineteen-thirties Hollywood set decorators and then adopted, along with mansard roofs, big doors, and lots of shiny surfaces, by a number of influential Los Angeles designers and architects in the mid-century. At the Viceroy, Wearstler took this already exaggerated style and maxed it out some more. An enormous cameo hangs over the front desk, the wallpaper is silver Mylar patterned with griffins, and a pair of ceramic whippets guards the elevator doors. The restaurant, in keeping with the hotel's theme of "modern British colonialism by the sea," is called Whist, and the library—yellow walls, yellow drapes, yellow Chinese Chippendale-style chairs, yellow shag rug—has a backgammon table and a flea-market oil painting. "It was a complete shock," Martyn Lawrence-Bullard, a Los Angeles designer who counts among his clients Cher, Christina Aguilera, and Elton John, said. "Everyone else was doing English country house or very strict mid-century." *Condé Nast Traveller* included the Viceroy on its Hot List in 2003, instructing readers to "imagine Austin Powers redesigning Clarence House."

Last fall, the Kor Group announced that it had sold a fifty per cent stake in its hotel-management business to Mubadala Development, an Abu Dhabi firm that belongs to the royal family. The partnership will allow Kor to expand in a difficult market. (Nonetheless, several high-profile Kor projects, including a Viceroy for lower Manhattan, have been put on hold.) The deal relied heavily on the strength of Wearstler's work and reputation. "It was a lot about the Brad and Kelly story and the personality of our product," a former employee said. "Their story bleeds through in the product—Hollywood, Beverly Hills, sex and glamour and avant-garde design." One commenter, posting on a real-estate blog after the deal was announced, wrote, "Kelly in a burqa = CAIN'T HARDLY WAIT!"

Interior design as a profession was invented by Elsie de Wolfe, an actress from a middle-class family, who catered to the new-money aristocrats of the Gilded Age: Condé Nast, Anne Vanderbilt, Henry Clay Frick. She popularized black-and-white, and created a vogue for Louis XVI chairs and leopard print. In 1926, she married a diplomat named Sir Charles Mendl, and her exploits, such as arriving at a party doing cartwheels, were recorded in lyrics by Noël Coward and Cole Porter ("When you hear that Lady Mendl standing up / Now turns a handspring landing up / On her toes, / Anything goes!"). She arrived in Los Angeles during the Second World War, which gave her proximity to the celebrity clientele she had been cultivating for years. According to Penny Sparke, the author of a recent book about her, "She knew how to provide the appropriate setting for people who were moving from one social position to another and who needed a material means of expressing their newly acquired identities."

Wearstler's clients tend to evince an exuberant, unself-conscious pleasure in wealth and its trappings: you don't hire her for subtlety, you hire her for what her critics call "muchness." Peter Morton commissioned her to do the high-roller suite at the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas (gold paisley wallpaper, faux-zebra rug, and an onyx bar); she is currently decorating, for Gwen Stefani and Gavin Rossdale, a large contemporary house in a gated community on Mulholland Drive, previously owned by Jennifer Lopez. Stacey Snider, one of the principals of DreamWorks, commissioned Wearstler to design and

SEDARIS READS SEDARIS. SEAN PENN READS BOB DYLAN. GLADWELL READS GLADWELL. DONALD SUTHERLAND READS ERNEST HEMINGWAY. STEPHEN KING READS STEPHEN KING. OBAMA READS OBAMA. COLBERT READS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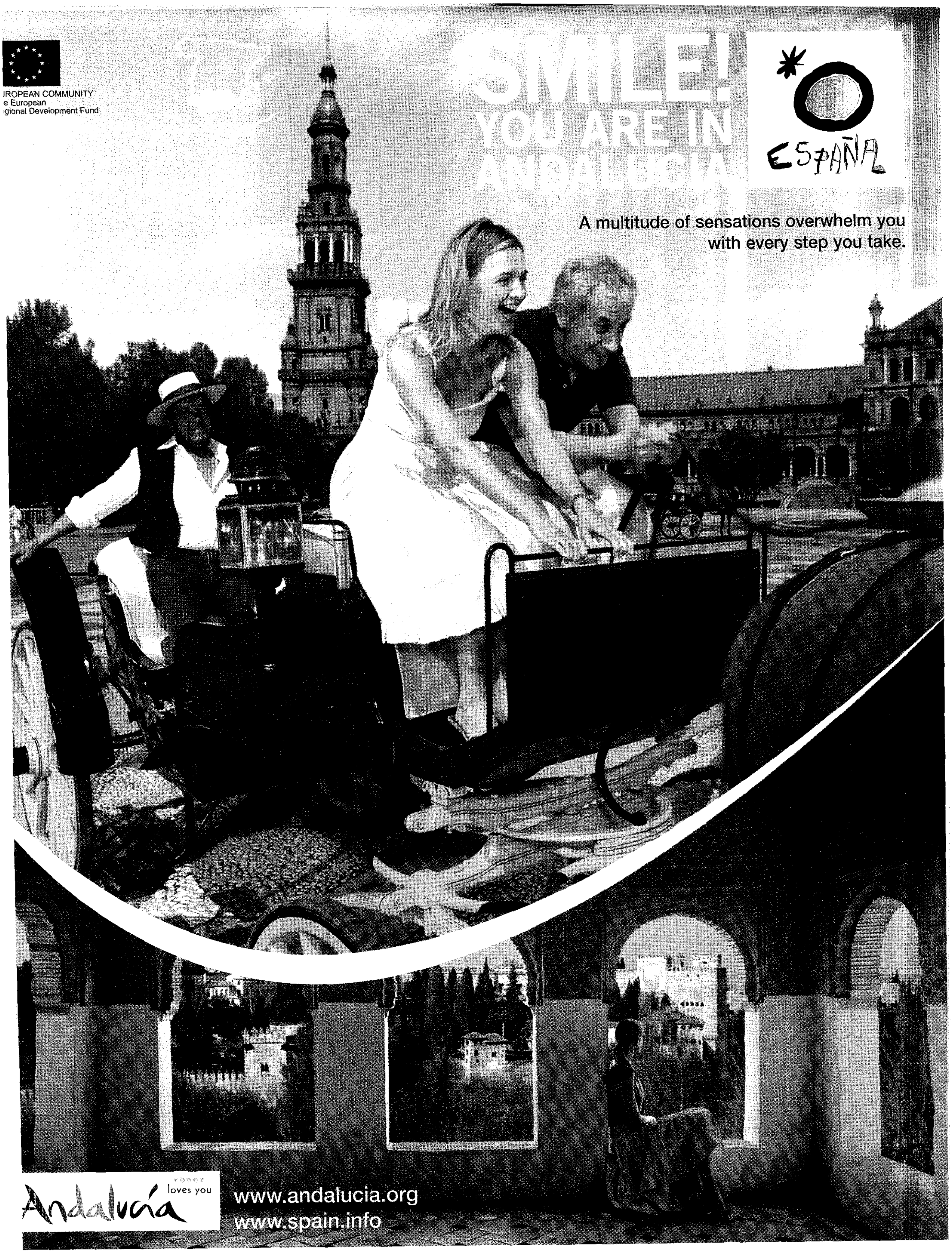
redecorate her house in Brentwood because she wanted to get away from "beige and beige and brown and earth tones." Snider said, "I wanted the house to feel like I had inherited most of it, if not all of it, from an eccentric Auntie Mame-type relative that I don't actually have." She ended up with a lemon-yellow dining room—a compromise, as Wearstler wanted Hermès orange—and, for the living room, a pair of chairs in yellow wool bouclé. "If you photographed that room in black-and-white you would think it was done by Elsie de Wolfe or Billy Haines," Snider said. "It could be in an old Hollywood movie. I should be in a peignoir with a cigarette holder—and I'm not, I'm in jeans."

Wearstler's own houses—and there have been many of them, each grander than the last—make up a significant portion of her residential portfolio. One of these, built by the architect Hal Levitt for Charles Skouras, Jr., the son of a Greek movie-theatre tycoon, in 1958, was sleek and modern when Wearstler and Korzen bought it. Wearstler covered every inch of it with malachite, onyx, and mirror, antique carpets from Agra and Khotan, statues of turbaned blackamoors, and Chinese screens, a bedazzlement that is documented in her second book, "Domicilium Decoratus." In the book's opening pages, Wearstler appears in her doorway, flanked by a pair of Asiatic bronze cats, wearing a floor-length one-shoulder butter-yellow vintage Azzaro dress. In equally elegant attire, she prunes a houseplant, waters the garden, knits, and stands on a library ladder, reading a biography of Elsie de Wolfe. Opposite an anodyne imperative—"Parade the porcelain, celebrate the stemware, but keep the sippy cups in a drawer"—she is pictured selecting dishes from a vast china cabinet, wearing a full-skirted Oscar de la Renta gown in the black-and-white of a domestic's uniform. Wearstler christened the house Hillcrest Estate; Hillcrest is also the name of a china pattern she designed—white porcelain, with gold sea anemones—that will début this fall, in a collection that also includes Pickfair, a pattern named for the Beverly Hills street where Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks's mansion once stood.

The fashions of "Domicilium" are part of a plan, long contemplated by Wearstler, to expand into women's apparel. She cites Coco Chanel as a major influence. "Someday, I want to have a store where I'll sell accessories, furniture, and clothing, like Ralph Lauren," she says. For the past year, she has been working on a line of jewelry, scarves, bags, and belts. The collection includes necklaces made from heavy chains for hanging chandeliers and others decorated with drawer pulls; wooden dowels as pendants; leather cuffs studded with upholstery nails; and brass beads from a lighting catalogue strung onto black silk ribbon—Lanvin meets macaroni-shell necklace from summer-camp arts-and-crafts class. A mockup board in Wearstler's office shows a photograph of her with an enormous tassel fringe in metallic gold wool, the kind that would be used to trim a piece of furniture, draped across her chest as a bib necklace.

Two years ago, Wearstler and Korzen, with their two children, Elliott and Oliver, who are five and seven, moved into an eleven-thousand-square-foot house on three acres just north of Sunset Boulevard, in Beverly Hills, for which they paid some twenty-eight million dollars to the estate of Albert (Cubby) Broccoli, the producer of the James Bond films. Originally a Spanish hacienda, it was remodelled by James Dolena into a Georgian-style pavilion for the actor William Powell in 1935. Wearstler has wallpapered it in large-scale patterns custom-made to her requirements. The wallpaper covering one foyer and extending up an elegantly curved staircase looks as if it were created by a giant toddler with access to a tub of pink finger paint. "I said I want something that feels like Jackson Pollock or like an art installation," Wearstler said, showing me around the house. "I also said it should be kind of graffiti, but a little more delicate, not as hard-edged, a little more refined." At the base of the stairs is a pink-and-turquoise vignette: a turquoise console made of two inverted triangles with a plank across the top, two pink resin sculptures, and a pair of nineteen-forties round-back chairs that once belonged to Geoffrey Beene, which she re-covered in leather the color of a Miami swimming pool. She stroked the wooden armrests, where the paint was flaking off. "You see that amazing paint patina," she said. "They're beat up, but I like that, kind of just not so precious."

One summer afternoon, Wearstler was at home, readying the house to be photographed for "Hue," her third book, which will be published late this



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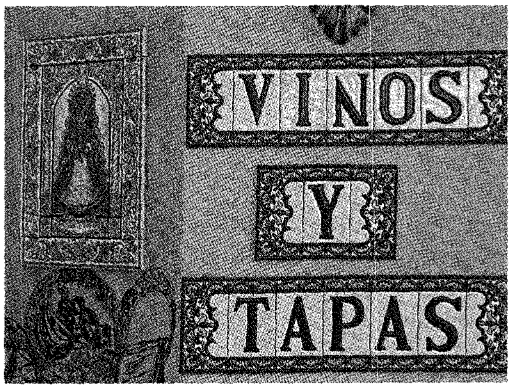

A alucía: astronomic Paradise

The cuisine of Andalucía is as rich with the spirit of improvisation as flamenco, the region's native dance. Tapas were first created here as ad hoc lids for glasses of Andalucía's famous sherry. Gazpacho is the signature dish, which began as a basic blend of bread, olive oil, garlic, vinegar, and spices. When Columbus brought back tomatoes and peppers from the New World, the recipe evolved into the familiar cold tomato soup so popular today, often presented as a gourmet dish served with savory garnishes. Also developed in the area is *ajo blanco,* a cold soup thickened with almonds that dates from the time of the Moors.

Dani García, a chef who is a rising star in Andalucía, continues the imaginative approach to food preparation at Calima, his beachside restaurant in Marbella. A disciple of Ferrán Adrià, who drew the food world to eastern Spain with his avant-garde interpretations of haute cuisine, García focuses on the agricultural wealth of his own native south. From his kitchen, the sea bass comes to the table grilled over hot coals and black sand, which evoke the sensations of a seaside barbecue.

Andalucía's Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts are a constant reminder of sea-inspired feasts. Prawns, langoustines, clams, sardines, hake, bream, grouper, and tuna—all these and much more sizzle on grills and in sauté pans, ready to be anointed with the region's fruity olive oil. Andalucía is the world's largest producer of the golden elixir, with groves concentrated in Jaén and Córdoba provinces, and local cooks seem to have developed a special talent for frying. The exquisitely light crispness of fried anchovies, squid, and small fish is considered the perfect match for chilled, bone-dry Manzanilla sherry.

In the tapas bars of Seville and Granada, ham is the culinary star. The most coveted hams are the world-renowned *jamón de Jabugo*, the air-cured product of Iberian pigs who gorge on acorns and roots in the mountains of Huelva province. Connoisseurs of Spanish ham consider acorn-fed pigs to yield the best meat, which is why this exceptional ham is a favorite indulgence among locals and visitors.

WINE ROUTES

A tasting tour of Cádiz's Sherry Triangle towns and cities is a revelation of subtlety and nuance. Be sure to visit the wineries of Jerez de la Frontera, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, and El Puerto de Santa Maria.

TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: ANDALUSIAN OLIVE OIL ©GARY YEOWELL/GETTY IMAGES; SIGN OUTSIDE BAR, COSTA DEL SOL ©KEN WELSH/ALAMY

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fall. Its chapters are organized by color: camellia, wisteria, vermillion; pyrite, alabaster, onyx; cerulean, tourmaline, peridot. The front door was open; sunlight splashed across an inlaid floor of emerald-green quartzite and Calacatta marble. Wearstler, in low-rise white jeans, a white T-shirt, and white canvas sneakers, zipped through the dining room. "I've been moving furniture all day, and I worked out this morning!" she said, beaming and flexing an arm. The dining-room table was crowded with an installation of sculptures and statuary: a huge white plaster foot in a Grecian sandal, a tall Oscar-golden figure, a naked couple in an embrace. The human form is of abiding interest to Wearstler. She avoids red meat and follows a regime of protein powder, essential oils, and Green Superfoods and Miracle Reds, and she exercises religiously. Her architect told me that at one point she considered converting a small outbuilding—a former chapel, he believes—into a personal gym.

The day's shoot was of her boudoir, a deep, carpeted chamber with slim columns, and rows of color-coördinated shoes (six pairs yellow, six pairs orange, six pairs pink, cowgirl boots, and a separate area for oxfords). Wearstler addressed a shelf of hats, tucking a tuft of white lace under the brim of a miniature white top hat, removing a purple sequinned beret—a memorable accessory from "Top Design," where she wore it with a fur jacket, over a head of teased-out hair. The photographer's assistant asked what she wanted to hang in the doorway. "Let me run and get something," Wearstler said, reappearing a moment later with two dresses: a short, ruched metallic snakeskin-print number and an ankle-length translucent gown. "This one looks like your great-grandmother's bedtime dress," she said, discarding the long one. On the floor underneath the hats, she arranged a pair of high heels to look as if they'd just been kicked off. This is a Wearstler touch—a stagy sexiness reminiscent of burlesque, or a late-night movie on Lifetime.

Wearstler wandered into the bathroom, lined in Belgian black-and-gold marble, with a geometric inlaid floor of the same material. She sat down on a small chair and set to work on her BlackBerry. Beside her was a bathtub with a view of a tennis court, a swimming pool, and a dramatic colonnaded pool house. In the window stood a neoclassical female nude—headless, with one arm, and a suggestion of fabric covering her in front. Her bare rump faced the pool.

The Rothbarts said yes to an orange carpet for Gabriella's closet. "I don't understand it, but I trust it," Stan said. They nixed the green cheetah-print chintz Wearstler suggested for the curtains on a fourposter bed in a guest room, and Stan requested something a little more masculine than the turquoise that had been selected for the bedroom of their six-year-old son. Miriam and Gabriella began to pick through packets of trail mix, in lieu of lunch; Wearstler took swigs from a vitamin potion. Stan lifted up a piece of metallic goat hide that glistened like mica. "This is amazing," he said. Wearstler cast him a gentle look. He was learning.

The conversation turned to the mudroom. Stan asked if the design could be changed to include cubbyholes. "The kids have so much stuff," he said.

"*So* much," Gabriella said, moodily.

"They have the wall," Miriam said, referring to a row of coat hooks. Stan wasn't convinced; Miriam didn't want to budge. For a moment, it seemed the children might go the way of the Rothbart family dogs.

The meeting ended, more than three hours after it had begun. The Rothbarts got ready to leave. "We really wanted her specific look," Miriam said. "We have the books at home. When we looked at her house to buy it, I remember loving the onyx in the bathroom."

"I loved all those couches," Stan said. Miriam looked momentarily weary, and said, "We should've just bought that house." ♦

BLOCK THAT METAPHOR!

From the BBC's sports Web site.

England were still in the hunt and from there the momentum started to turn. From the time we left the Edgbaston changing room, the impetus had not only turned but started to gather into a tidal wave which eventually wore us into the ground.

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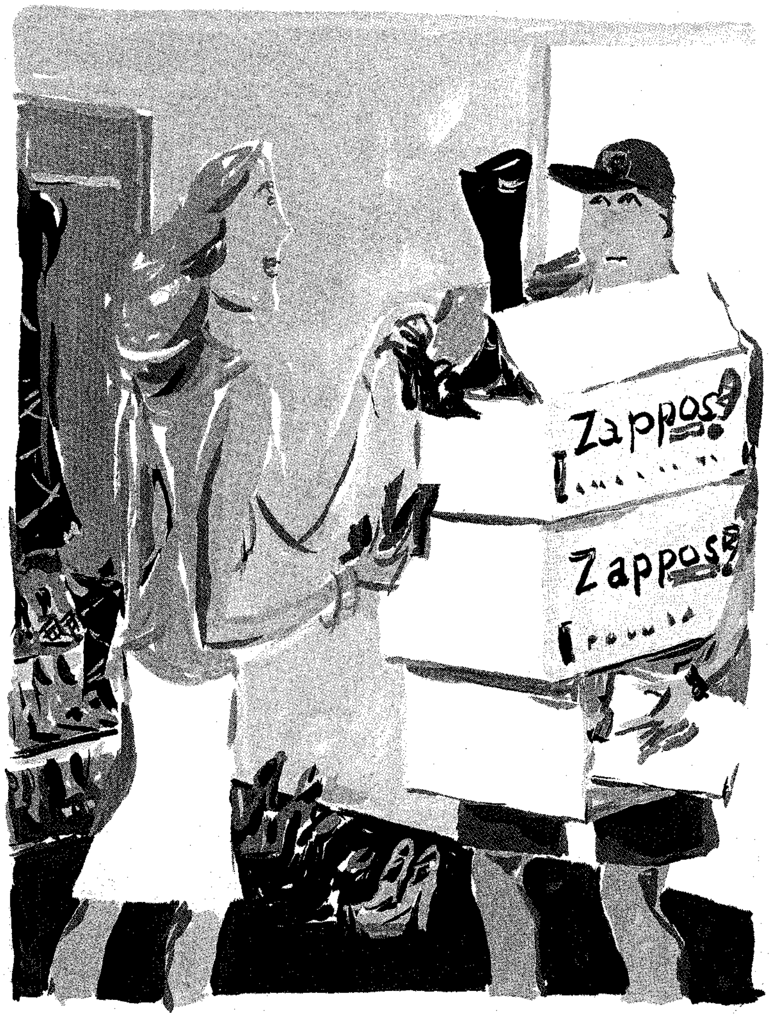
ANNALS OF RETAIL

HAPPY FEET

Inside the online shoe utopia.

BY ALEXANDRA JACOBS



Thanks to Zappos's yearlong return policy, we can all be Imelda Marcos.

JEAN-PHILIPPE DELHOMME

On a recent afternoon at the Henderson, Nevada, headquarters of Zappos, America's leading online shoe retailer, Katrina Jadkowski, a member of the company's three-hundred-and-fifty-person Customer Loyalty Team, was on the phone with an elderly woman named Susie, from Aurora, Colorado, who wanted to exchange a pair of too-snug New Balance sneakers. "I just got back in town and I have an orthotics appointment," Susie said, sounding a bit anxious about this newfangled shopping experience.

Jadkowski, a British-born, divorced former showgirl whose colleagues have nicknamed her Hurricane, arranged to have a UPS return label printed and a replacement pair, size 5½ EE, shipped free, overnight. "That's just beautiful—I love this company!" Susie shouted.

Typing in the order rapidly, red flower decals on her fingernails, Jadkowski told Susie that it was Zappos's tenth anniversary and upgraded her to V.I.P. status—which pretty much any Zappos shopper can attain, merely by asking. (The URL of the V.I.P. site is intended to encourage the intimate act of bookmarking, since a Google search for "sensible black pumps" or "running shoes" will also turn up the company's competitors.) Male callers in particular seem to enjoy the upgrade, with its suggestion of velvet-roped back rooms. Susie, too, was pleased. "Oh, that's fabulous!" she said. "This is super."

The two women giggled conspiratorially for a few moments, and Jadkowski asked if there was anything else she could do.

"No," Susie said. "Oh, I'm tickled."

Jadkowski wished her a nice day and disconnected the call. "Sometimes you just need to let them natter on," she said, not unkindly.

The Customer Loyalty Team, or C.L.T., is the nerve center of Zappos, whose thirty-five-year-old C.E.O., Tony Hsieh, has earned a zealous following by imposing an ethos of live human connection on the chilly, anonymous bazaar of the Internet. He talks about being the architect of a movement to spread happiness, or "Zappiness," via three "C"s: clothing, customer service, and company culture.

"Eventually, we'll figure out a way of spreading that knowledge to the world in general, and that has nothing to do with selling shoes online," he told me after I visited the company over the summer.

Owning a large collection of shoes in various styles and colors has, in the past decade, gone from being considered a sign of ultimate imperial excess (Imelda Marcos) to a constitutional right of the average American woman, and Zappos is at least partly responsible. (So is "Sex and the City.") Hsieh (pronounced "shay") has changed the business so radically that, in July, Amazon.com, after trying to compete with Zappos by starting a shoe site called Endless.com, as if to sanction the new insatiability, announced plans to buy the company for ten million shares of stock (worth $790 million at press time) plus $40 million in cash. In an S.E.C. filing, Amazon vowed to leave Zappos's management structure intact.

"There're plenty of companies that don't grow, and that's fine for, like, your mom-and-pop corner store," Hsieh said to me two weeks later, over the phone from Minneapolis, where he was addressing General Mills. (He has become a coveted "get" on the motivationalspeaker circuit.) "But, for me personally at Zappos, the company needs to grow in order for the *movement* to happen."

When he was asked how he and Amazon's C.E.O., Jeff Bezos, will share power in the new order, he said, "Yeah . . . we'll see."

At its most rarefied, shoe shopping still takes place in hushed, pastel-carpeted salons, with salesmen (they are usually men—one doesn't like to think too closely about why) staggering under stacks of boxes and kneeling down to insure the perfect fit before whisking away the charge plates of their waiting Cinderellas. Some people still consider pawing through the sale racks at Bloomingdale's or the fluorescent-lit aisles of the Designer Shoe Warehouse an enjoyable contact sport. But Zappos and its imitators—shoes.com, heels.com, and the Gap's inexplicably named piperlime.com—are shifting this public transaction into the comfort and privacy of customers' living rooms. There, thanks to Zappos's three-hundred-and-sixty-five-day return policy, we can all be Imelda Marcos, sifting through ceiling-high piles of boxes, and waiting in sweatpanted indolence for the UPS man to pick up our rejects.

Unlike most Web sites, including Amazon's, which seem to be operated by spectral forces rather than by human beings, Zappos prominently displays a toll-free customer-service phone number. There are no limits on call times, and the resulting sessions occasionally resemble protracted talk therapy. On July 5th, a twenty-two-year-old C.L.T. member named Britnee Brown, who has been with the company for a little more than a year, took a call that was a record five hours, twenty-five minutes, and thirty-one seconds long, from a woman on the East Coast interested in Masai Barefoot Technology shoes, which purport to mimic supposedly salubrious barefoot-on-the-beach walking with curved rubber platforms. "We started talking about her sister," Brown said. The call that set the previous record lasted more than four hours, with a woman afflicted by peripheral neuropathy who had trouble feeling her feet. "She told me childhood stories, things like that," Jennifer S., the operator who handled that one, said in a video posted on YouTube. Zappos has advertised sparingly thus far, preferring word of mouth, and (unlike most companies) encourages employees to let it all hang out on Twitter and Facebook.

This marketing strategy seems to be working, up to a point. In the first half of 2009, not generally considered a bright spot for American retail, buyers of fashion footwear spent almost twenty per cent more through online-only channels than they had the previous year, according to the NPD Group, a market-research firm, while sales at shoe chains, department stores, and stand-alone shops were down about eleven per cent each. In 2008, Zappos surpassed a billion dollars in gross sales, an occasion that its fiercely clannish employees—who operate under a program of ten Core Values (No. 3: Create Fun and a Little Weirdness)—celebrated with clanging cowbells, followed by vodka shots at a local Claim Jumper restaurant. Because of the lenient return policy, however, net sales were only six hundred and thirty-five million dollars, according to the Amazon S.E.C. filing, and, after operating costs, net profits were $10.8 million, which explains why Hsieh, though he insisted that "the Amazon thing is not about the money," might have been amenable to an infusion of capital.

The Henderson headquarters, three squat beige buildings surrounded by palm and flowering plum trees, have become an unlikely pilgrimage spot for businesspeople, tourists, and the odd celebrity, many ferried to and from their hotels on the Las Vegas Strip in a complimentary shuttle van. Inside, they are greeted by a concierge-like Help Desk of about a dozen support personnel, whose services include occasional free hugs. Apart from a smattering of shoe samples, there is no physical evidence of the company's wares on the premises. (Merchandise is stored in and shipped from an eight-hundred-and-thirty-two-thousand-square-foot warehouse, roamed by robots, in Shepherdsville, Kentucky.) Visitors come to marvel at the spectacle of peppy, dedicated workers: a utopia of communal cheer and solicitude; trilled "Good morning"s and "Hi, pumpkin!"s; free vats of popcorn, nuts, and trail mix; and politely held doors. Entering the lobby, which

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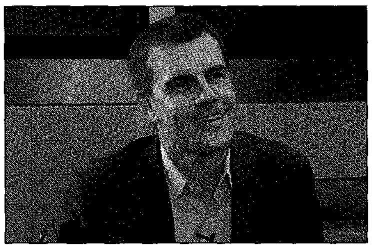

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was decorated with Christmas lights at the height of the desert summer, a stranger gets the feeling that amphetamines might be pumped through the central air-conditioning. On my maiden shuttle trip, the driver mentioned that the relentlessly upbeat vibe at Zappos—Core Value No. 7: Build a Positive Team and Family Spirit—had broken up her marriage. "My husband didn't fit in with the culture," she said. "He was too gangsta."

Zappos was founded in 1999, during the first Internet gold rush, by a Bay Area entrepreneur named Nick Swinmurn. He'd been irritated when he couldn't find a pair of brown Airwalks at his local mall. Hsieh, originally an adviser and investor through a concern called Venture Frogs, joined the company a year later. After graduating from Harvard, he'd operated an Internet ad-banner venture called LinkExchange with a classmate, Alfred Lin (now Zappos's C.O.O.), which was sold to Microsoft for two hundred and sixty-five million dollars in 1998. Hsieh was rich, and bored. "I just liked working for Zappos," he said. "It was about: What kind of company can we create where we all want to be there, including me? How can we create such a great environment, where employees get so much out of it that they would do it for free?" And, in fact, some Zapponians, as they are known, draw a wage as low as eleven dollars an hour.

The company's name comes from the Spanish word for shoe, *zapato*, a word that also turned out to be fortuitously evocative of the way goods are "zapped" to customers. (Core Value No. 1: Deliver WOW Through Service.) A C.L.T. manager named Jane Judd, her eyes damp, described a Q. & A. session she had heard Hsieh conduct with some visiting Time Warner executives. "Our service isn't everything it could be," he'd said. "If we didn't have to think about cost, the reps would personally get on a plane today and deliver that box."

"I always call him my little Dalai Lama," Judd said.

Soft-spoken and introverted, Hsieh has become an unlikely business guru: a young philosopher prince of the middle-management set, to whom he is fond of distributing an annual "Culture Book" of warbling testimonials collected from Zappos employees, as if it were the Gideon Bible, and recommending titles on the science of happiness, like "The Happiness Hypothesis," by Jonathan Haidt, and "Happier," by Tal Ben-Shahar. He is also writing a book of his own for Grand Central Publishing, tentatively titled "Delivering Happiness"—"a combination of talking about Zappos, the culture, core values, and the science of happine*ssss*," he said, stretching out the word. For Hsieh, happiness is a quantifiable quality that seems synonymous with "calm."

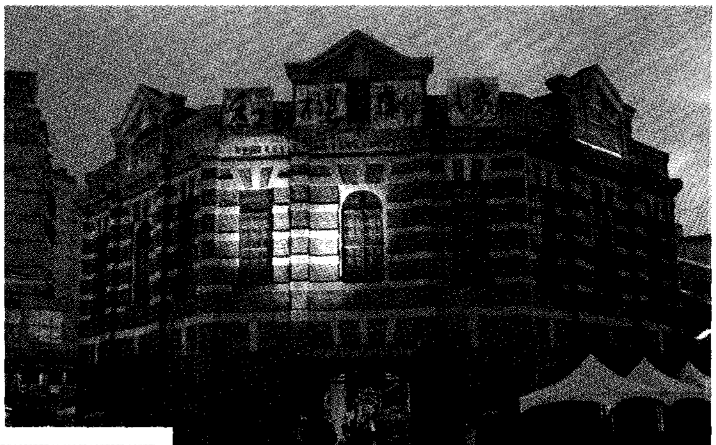
"Generally, I associate drama with negative emotions, and I want to experience positive emotions," he said.

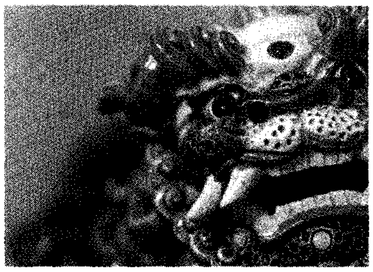
It was a week before the Amazon deal was announced, to general shock within the company, where Hsieh, whose mother is a clinical psychologist, has promoted a culture of absolute transparency (Core Value No. 6: Build Open and Honest Relationships with Communication). He was standing at the back of a classroom filled with twenty out-of-town businesspeople who'd paid five thousand dollars apiece for a symposium titled "Zappos Insights Live": a two-day "culture immersion" into the company. They'd been instructed to write two truths about themselves and one lie on an index card, then stand up and name their favorite movie.

" 'Forrest Gump,' " one of them, a gangly young man named Eric James, from a company in Colorado called PosterBrain.com, said, to murmurs of approval. A "Zappos Insights" leader read James's card: "Pickled pigs' feet was my favorite food as a kid." (True.) "My first business was inventing magic tricks." (True.) "I've visited over 100 countries." (Lie.)

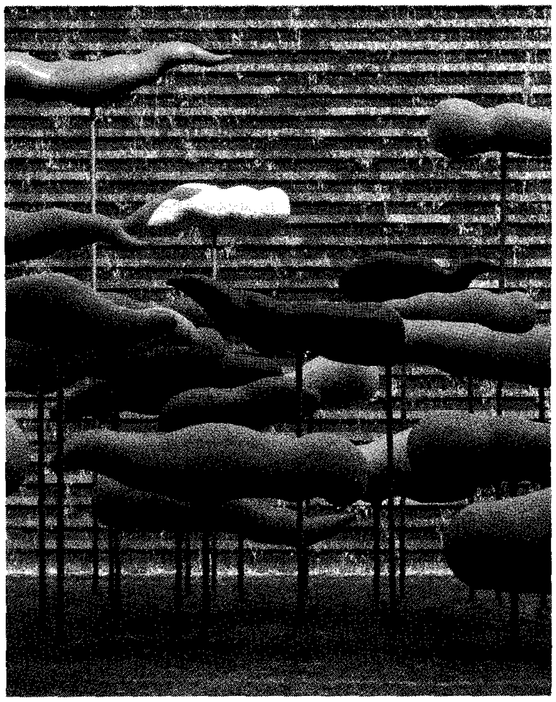
"For favorite movie, I'm gonna have

"I'm not trying to be beautiful—I'm just trying to look better than everyone else there."





In this report on Taiwan, travel writer Rudy Maxa wraps up the six-part series that began last December with an homage to the island nation's rich cultural story.



Taiwan for Art Lovers

AS I TRAVELED THROUGH TAIWAN, I felt a strong sense of history and culture at nearly every turn. The influence of the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, and Japanese, as well as the indigenous people who have lived on the green island for thousands of years, is evident in Taiwan's architecture, cuisine, music, and religion. But it's the pervasive influence of Mainland China whose residents migrated to the island beginning in the seventeenth century that mostly informs Taiwan's culture today. And the cathedral to that heritage is Taipei's National Palace Museum, which holds the world's largest collection of Chinese artifacts.

About 15,000 artifacts of the **National Palace Museum's** collection of nearly 650,000 objects are on display at any one time—the rest are stored in vaults in the mountain that provides a backdrop for the museum on the edge of Taipei. Most of the treasures were brought from Mainland China in the late forties by Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists as they retreated in the face of Mao Tse-tung's Communist forces. Priceless paintings, rare books, bronzes, ceramics, glassware, calligraphy, and furniture were crated and stored in protected warehouses until the museum building was completed in 1965. The

fine inventory and stunning quality of artifacts can be overwhelming to a visitor, but English labels for each display, and handheld audio devices with explanations in English, make the museum very user-friendly.

When I visited, I chose to focus on small-scale items with impressive detail: intricately carved miniature ivory boxes for which one emperor hoped history would remember him; calligraphic brush strokes said to reflect the emotion of the writer at the moment of creation; an olive pit from the Qing dynasty that was carved into a tiny boat with eight passengers and doors that open and close; miniature glass snuff bottles painted from the *inside*; jade cicadas from the Han dynasty placed under the tongues of the recently deceased to insure reincarnation; and the famous eight-inch Qing dynasty leafy bok choy ("Jadeite Cabbage with Insects") carved from a piece of white-and-green jade, that's meant to represent purity and fertility.

Special exhibits rotate all year. One temporary exhibit, "Harmony and Integrity: Emperor Yongzheng and His Times," runs from early October through January 10th. The splendor of the National Palace Museum's collection cannot be overstated, and it's not unreasonable to spend a day browsing. There are several onsite cafés and a restaurant where visitors can repair for refreshments or lunch.

While the National Palace Museum is the best-known museum in Taipei, there are many other gems in town. The **SuHo Memorial Paper Museum** offers a fascinating look at the history of papermaking, and examples of handmade paper from around the world are on display. The **Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines** records the history of Taiwan's fourteen recognized aboriginal groups with scale-model recreations of traditional villages and exhibits of clothing and farming equipment as well as funerary and religious objects. Aficionados of modern art will want to visit the former Taipei City Hall, which reopened in 2001 as the **Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA Taipei)**. The **Taipei Fine Arts Museum** features cutting-edge artwork by Taiwan's best artists since 1940.

Also in Taipei is the **Red House Theater**, a former market building that now hosts puppetry performances and children's theatre. Glove puppetry is a Chinese tradition that was once one of Taiwan's primary sources of entertainment. Today's practitioners portray sophisticated battles in elaborate costumes, and one of the best places to see this is the **Puppetry Art Center of Taipei.** The **2-28 Memorial Museum** commemorates those killed in the 1947 uprising against the Chinese Nationalist rule of Taiwan and reminds visitors of a violent turning point in island history. This memorial and the adjacent park are meant to renew the collective soul of Taiwan.

Outside of Taipei, visitors find a trove of museums as well, such as the **Cochin Ceramics Museum** in Chiayi City in southwestern Taiwan. Its ceramics are colorful works of art that often tell a story. In the archipelago of Penghu, the island of Xiyu boasts a homestead called the **Erkan Hamlet** that's built in the classic Fujian architectural style. In Kaohsiung, the **Museum of History** uses furniture, lacquerware, maps, and art to trace the history of this seaport city, Taiwan's second largest. Just south of Taipei, Yingge is the country's "City of Pottery." The **Yingge Ceramics Museum** showcases both historic and modern pottery, including objects as varied as teapots, pickling jars, and tiles.

One of the more dramatic museums outside of Taipei is the **National Museum of Prehistory** in the southeastern coastal town of Taitung. Twenty-nine years ago, construction workers building a railway station came upon what turned out to be a major prehistoric archaeological site, a Peinan settlement dating as far back as three thousand years B.C. Archeologists are still making discoveries here, but eight years ago an ultra-modern museum opened nearby that revealed some of the riches unearthed so far. Here, visitors see re-creations of how Austronesian people lived thanks to the discovery of homesites, spearheads, decorated pottery from the Neolithic Age, coffins, megaliths, and musical instruments.

My weeklong tour of Taiwan, made effortless by the country's superb roads and bullet-train system, encompassed not only key cultural attractions but the island nation's exquisite natural assets, wonderful Chinese cuisine, and a requisite ride up the world's fastest elevator in the world's tallest completed building (Taipei 101, the city's modern landmark). I also delighted in the details: the über-hip Eslite Bookstore (Taipei's first bookstore open around the clock); the fact that the Taiwanese are voracious readers, which is why literary supplements are part of many daily newspapers; and, of course, there was my unforgettable home stay in a mountain stone house of a Rukai tribe family. For such a compact country, Taiwan gives the visitor a surfeit of long-lasting memories.

Rudy Maxa is the host and executive producer of the public television series "Rudy Maxa's World."

For more information on Taiwan,
visit **WWW.GO2TAIWAN.NET**

Touch Your Heart

COVER IMAGES, FROM TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: COCHIN CERAMICS MUSEUM ©SHENGHUNG LIN; RED HOUSE THEATER EXTERIOR ©HERBERT HO; MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, TAIWAN ©FRANCIS WU; YINGGE CERAMICS MUSEUM ©LIAO YUSHENG. *THIS PAGE:* PAPER EXHIBIT IMAGE AT SUHO MEMORIAL MUSEUM ©WOODY HSEIEH

to say . . . my life?" said a perky auburn-haired woman, Camille Preston, who works in executive development at a company called Aim Leadership.

After about an hour of this, Hsieh glided to the front of the room, wearing jeans, a silky black shirt, untucked, and black shoes, and began a laid-back PowerPoint presentation.

"What would you be passionate about doing, even if you never made a dime?" he asked the assembled. "What is your goal in life? For almost everyone, it comes down to happiness." He moistened his lips, and summoned a bouncing smiley face onto the screen. "What if you could go straight to the happiness?"

The visitors watched raptly, scribbling in white binders and drinking from bottles of Sparkletts water.

Later, after Italian food at the Palms hotel, the group repaired to the Playboy Club. As bored-looking Bunnies stood stiffly against pounding hip-hop music, James was having trouble finding the happiness.

"Steph, my ex-girlfriend—she up and left me," he told Hsieh, who was standing near the bar, sipping a vodka-and-soda through a straw. "We'd just bought a car together and everything."

"Well, what if you thought of a relationship as a corporation?" Hsieh said.

"Have you tested this, Tony?" James asked.

"No, this is theoretical. This is taking a logical approach. But it's an interesting thing about companies and relationships. Maybe the only thing that keeps you together is the core values."

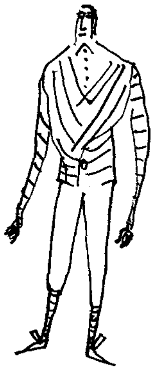
James proposed that perhaps in the future Zappos might start an online dating service, like Match.com or eHarmony. Hsieh shrugged and said, "Sure, why not?"

"ZHarmony," James said, with a hollow laugh. "Happiness in a box!"

The next morning, Hsieh met me in a small, colorful conference room nicknamed the Aladdin, for the casino. He was holding a can of sugar-free Red Bull in his left hand and a can of Pepsi One in his right. "I've always been a night owl—I never want to go to sleep," he said. "It's so hard to wake up." He had on a T-shirt printed with the company's logo—a graphic shoeprint—faded blue jeans, and black sneakers. When asked what brand the shoes were, he gestured helplessly and replied, "Just . . . sneakers."

Hsieh's success in the fetishized retail category of shoes is curious because of his utter disengagement from the product; when he talks about "platforms," he is referring to a business framework, not to thick soles. As an undergraduate computer-science major, he worked as a software engineer for BBN Technologies, the company that, in the seventies, put the @ in e-mail.

"I've never been into shoes—and I'm still not," he said. Zappos has begun to expand from shoes, as Amazon did from its base of books, into other categories of merchandise: handbags, clothes. "Kitchenware, housewares, whatever," Hsieh said. But he's not really interested in those things, either. "I much prefer experiences to stuff," he said.



Hsieh drives a modest black Mazda 6. He used to go to raves; now he watches movies for fun. "I loved 'Adaptation,' " he said. (Zappos Core Value No. 2: Embrace and Drive Change.) His one apparent indulgence is a baronial new house in the Southern Highlands, a gated golf community (although he does not play golf). It contains a panelled library with well-stocked, floor-to-ceiling bookshelves; a billiard room; and a pool, around which little puffs of mist hydrate the landscaping at regular intervals. This past Fourth of July, as the Amazon deal was percolating behind closed doors, he held a party for employees, with water guns. "Less raucous than usual," the shuttle driver with the busted-up marriage reported.

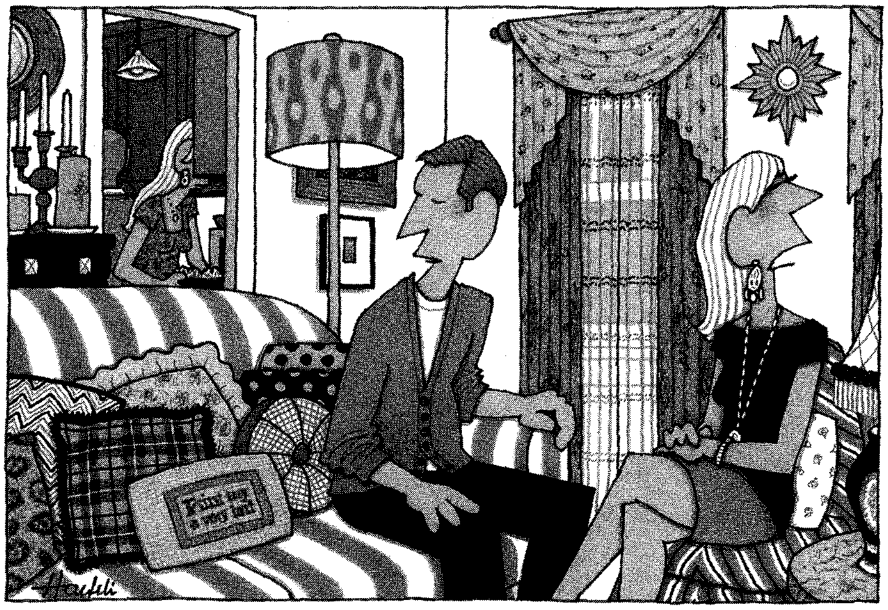
(When I told Hsieh what the bus driver had said about her divorce, he remarked, "Maybe they weren't the right fit and shouldn't have gotten married in the first place. But Zappos helped open their eyes. Like Plato's Cave.")

Each of his house's five bedrooms, like the office conference rooms, is themed to a glossy Vegas hotel: the Mirage, Circus Circus. The master suite is a close replica of a room at the minimalist W: black and gray and silver, down to a pillow on the bed emblazoned with the word "Wish." There is a walk-in closet filled with shirts and slacks, and one suit, which Hsieh said he shares with a brother and wears only to weddings. He lives alone, aside from a stray calico cat with matted fur, which he has named El Gato and sometimes feeds. "Not mine," he stressed. In this isolated pleasure dome, littered with Gatorade bottles and pizza boxes, he seems to be evading traditional adult value systems, living in a sort of suspended collegiate state. (In a letter to Zappos employees about the Amazon deal, he compared his feelings about the sale to those he experienced on graduation day.) "I had this weird recurring dream where for some reason I just forgot that I had a place in New York, like an apartment or something, but it was a very cool place, like the W, and I tried to go visit it," he said. "But I didn't have the key, I didn't have anything I needed."

Snobbery is not one of Zappos's core values. The company has had trouble wooing certain luxury brands, like Jimmy Choo and Gucci, to the site, although Marc Jacobs, Alexander McQueen, and Proenza Schouler are represented, in a division marked Couture. The company has done better accommodating the country's marginal: the freaks of nature as well as the fashion-conscious. Brick-and-mortar stores, under pressure to maintain a certain number of sales per square foot of space, do not tend to carry women's size 15 or men's sextuple-E widths, but Zappos has become a destination for the jock, the drag queen, the disabled.

Hsieh wants to help these customers reach their full potential. "Long-term, it's not even about e-commerce necessarily," he said. "I guess it's about an experiential brand that's really about making people happy, or improving their life somehow."

He left to take a phone call at his desk, which is in a row of cubicles along with the Zappos rank and file. Then he invited Fred Mossler, a fellow-executive whose duties are so motley that he doesn't have a title, to join us for lunch. A tall, tanned man of forty-three, with



"I like that everything is mismatched. I just think it could be mismatched better."

• •

slicked-back hair and a slightly worried expression, Mossler looks, reassuringly, like a traditional shoe salesman. He began his career unpacking freight in a Payless stockroom, then moved to Nordstrom, which, like Zappos, started as a shoe store and is famous for its customer service. He was a buyer there when he was recruited by Swinmurn (who left the company in 2006 but remains a shareholder).

At the Claim Jumper, Hsieh ordered a steak sandwich but ignored the bread. Mossler got a turkey burger and reminisced about a night, early in the company's history, when he and Hsieh were sharing a room at the Bellagio after a conference. "At about 3 A.M., I'm layin' in bed, and I start to feel it kind of shake," he said. "I open my eyes and look up, and there's Tony on the wall with his feet on either side of my head, so I'm looking up into his crotch and . . . I just couldn't really process that, so I closed my eyes and thought, It's a bad dream, maybe it'll go away. The next morning at breakfast, I'm talking to Tony, sharing my nightmare: 'Gosh, I thought you were above me on the wall like Spider-Man.' And he said, 'Actually, it's true. I had to get up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom and it was too dark to go across the room, so . . .' "

Hsieh shook some Tabasco into a ramekin filled with ketchup. "I've always been very good at climbing and scaling things," he said.

Though he has become increasingly visible as the face of Zappos and spends almost all his time proselytizing its culture, Hsieh resists the idea that he is powerful, or that the perpetuation of the brand rests on his shoulders. "For any company or movement or religion or whatever, if there's one person that personifies it then that puts that company or vision at risk, if the person, say, dies," he said. "What's gonna happen to Apple if something happens with Steve Jobs? That's why it needs to be about a movement, not about a person or even a specific company."

Every movement needs an influx of disciples, and Zappos, after laying off eight per cent of its sixteen hundred employees in the fall of 2008, has begun to hire again. The week of the "Zappos Insights" seminar, Dawn Hooper, a forty-year-old former massage therapist who was applying for a position on the Customer Loyalty Team, took a mandatory office tour, along with a retired United Airlines flight attendant named Skip Jourdan. Their guide, Annie Fedel, whose husband works in system administration for Zappos, became misty-eyed at the mention of Hsieh's leadership. "People say, 'I don't know how you work here—isn't it a cult?" she said. "And I say, 'Absolutely not.' "

"Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm," Jourdan said. At one of the reception desks, a pretty, cleavage-baring brunette named Heaven challenged him to a hula-hoop contest. "Whip it!" she yelled. "Whip it as hard as you can!" They whirled their hips enthusiastically for a few minutes.

The tour progressed past a large flat-screen television on the wall projecting a map of the United States. Pictures of shoes were popping up all over: Michael Kors sandals in Sarasota, Florida; Minnetonka moccasins in Seattle; Nike Classic Sweet Low Canvas in the middle of Pennsylvania. "These are orders taking place right now!" Fedel said.

"Crazy," Jourdan said.

Fedel next paused by a large bell hanging from the ceiling. She swivelled toward Hooper and said, "I need a volunteer to announce at the top of your lungs—something."

"Oh, my gosh," said Hooper, who had a tattoo of a hibiscus flower on her ankle. "I guess I should do it, but—my heart's pounding."

"Anything that floats your boat," Fedel said. "Just let it rip."

Hooper hesitated, then stepped forward and gave the bellpull a long jangle.

"I'm interviewing tomorrow for C.L.T.!" she screamed. The roomful of cubicle dwellers whooped, in a practiced way.

Zappos may not be a cult, but working there seems akin to sitting in a sports arena; you have to be prepared to stand up and do the wave at any time. Upstairs, the tour stopped in the office of Dr. Vik, an on-site life coach and retired chiropractor. The doctor was out, but Fedel insisted that everyone take turns selecting a tiara or a crown, sitting on a giant leather throne, then submitting to having a Polaroid photograph made. She told me later that job candidates taking the tour are closely observed; those who are brusque to the Help Desk personnel, for example, are weeded out immediately. All new hires sign a document verifying that they've read and understood the Core Values, then undergo a hundred and sixty hours of customer-loyalty training. At various points in the process, they are offered two thousand dollars in cash to quit. Workers who want to progress into management positions are required to take a hundred and forty-five more hours of classes, in subjects such as "tribal leadership," "performance enhancement," and "happiness." (Core Value No. 5: Pursue Growth and Learning.)

One of these classes, held in a room called the Elvis Presley, happened to contain many bleary-eyed C.L.T. members who had just come from the graveyard shift, where Zappos's basic assumption of human beings' essential good nature sometimes rubs up against some uglier truths. Eric Zuniga, a spiky-haired guy wearing a polo shirt who formerly worked in the shoe department at Dillard's, described a regular caller he'd nicknamed Jumping Jacks after the brand of patent-leather little-girls' Mary Janes with a hook-and-loop closure that he covets. Another will ask about dog leashes. Then there's the caller who, Zuniga said, will just "breathe kind of hard." It turns out that there are limits to Zappos's customer service: callers who truly overstep boundaries are sent to a top-secret eternal hold loop known internally as the Abyss.

For some employees, the news that their colorful little bricolage of a company had been bought by Amazon felt like a plunge into darkness.

"I thought it was a joke or something," Zuniga said on the phone a week after the announcement.

"It was quite disturbing," Hooper said. (She had been told that her hiring was imminent; the company was just waiting for some references to be checked.) She'd heard that the employees weren't happy "because Hsieh always said Zappos was his baby and he wouldn't sell out. Everybody's wondering what's going to happen now. It's going to be so big. I hope that Amazon will take what Zappos has and not the other way around."

Back at Jadkowski's twinkly workstation, there had been no sign of anything ominous. A parade of "Zappos Insights" students in suits, some wearing purple crowns printed with the Zappos logo, was tromping through the office. Their "graduation" had been marked with a serenade from an in-house a-cappella group, the Zappettes. "Congratulations on your gradu*ation.* We know you're filled with joy and ela*tion*," they sang. "We just want to *say*, we're glad you came our *way*."

A blue light on the wall blinked, signalling high call volume, and Jadkowski readjusted her headset. "We're having a great day at Zappos—how can I help you?" she said into the mouthpiece.

"Oh, hi," a female caller from New York City said. "I go way back with Zappos. I've been shopping with you for years, and I was just wondering—do you do price matches anymore?"

Jadkowski explained that Zappos had discontinued this policy in February of 2008, after Hsieh decided that he wanted the company to be known for shipping and service, not discount prices.

Undeterred, the caller expressed interest in a peep-toed platform mule by Robert Clergerie called the Zount—size 8, in rust-colored suède, with a three-and-a-half-inch heel—which had already been marked down, from six hundred and fifty-nine dollars to four hundred and seventy-one. "A friend of mine said she saw it at Scoop for two hundred dollars, and I just wondered," she said.

Jadkowski made a face and put the call on hold to do some sleuthing into the bargain hunter's account history. The woman had bought $12,531.32 of merchandise from Zappos since 2005, of which she'd returned about two-thirds. There was an alert indicating that this wasn't the first time she'd requested a price adjustment. "I think I'm not going to give it to her," Jadkowski said briskly. "But let's upgrade her!" She ran the decision by a supervisor and returned to the caller, who seemed sanguine. Indeed, she'd already put the Clergerie mule into her "shopping cart" and placed the order.

"But please, please—if you have any influence," she begged Jadkowski, "tell them to mark it down, O.K.? And then call me back." ♦

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Audio: Alexandra Jacobs talks about Zappos.

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One afternoon in early July, Christopher Bailey, the creative director of Burberry, the British fashion company, pulled his car over to the lip of a ridge near the English village of Warley Town. Sitting in the driver's seat, he stared out at the Yorkshire moors: hills and valleys, bogs and cloughs, sheep, cows, stone. Grass yielded to rushes and nettles, which gave way to grass again, tufting scarps of millstone grit.

The day was mild. Some sheep, pudgy and deliberate, trudged past the car, a black Mini Cooper. Aero chocolate wrappers and a pair of muddy Wellies littered the floorboard. "Hallo, sheep!" Bailey said. "They're sweet, huh?" He continued, "You see, it's so funny when people describe my shows as quite melancholy. A lot of people would describe *this* as melancholy—but I think it's so beautiful." He turned toward the left window. "Look at the hawk!" he said. A hawk swooped at something in the grass. "I think he must have found a rabbit," Bailey said. The grass shook. "Oh, he's got him! He's *hurting* something down there!"

Many visitors to the moors have sensed in them a mournful quality. To Bailey, the moors—he pronounces the word lowingly, with a "moo"—are a salve. "The smell of manure makes me happy," he has said. He calls himself a "home bird"; he is at ease mulching or barbecuing or watching TV, "soup on my lap." Bailey, who was born in Yorkshire, has a cottage in the western part of the county. He spends most weekends there. On a Sunday evening, before heading back to London, he will drive up to the moors, park, and sit for a solitary twenty minutes, watching the rain or hail, or whatever else the day has wrought, beat upon the land.

Bailey is an idealist in a field of cynics, an enthusiast amid the cult of the blasé. It is impossible to read about him without encountering the word "boyish." He has blond eyebrows, a quick smile, mussed hair the color of hay. He brings to mind a kid on a cereal box, but his diet tends toward Maltesers malt balls. ("I live off chocolate, and it's really bad—my skin ought to be even worse than it is," he said.) He is a self-proclaimed "skinny runt." Speaking of the company's philanthropic foundation, he delivers, with a straight face, such lines as "We set it up, basically, to be able to give back and to try to help

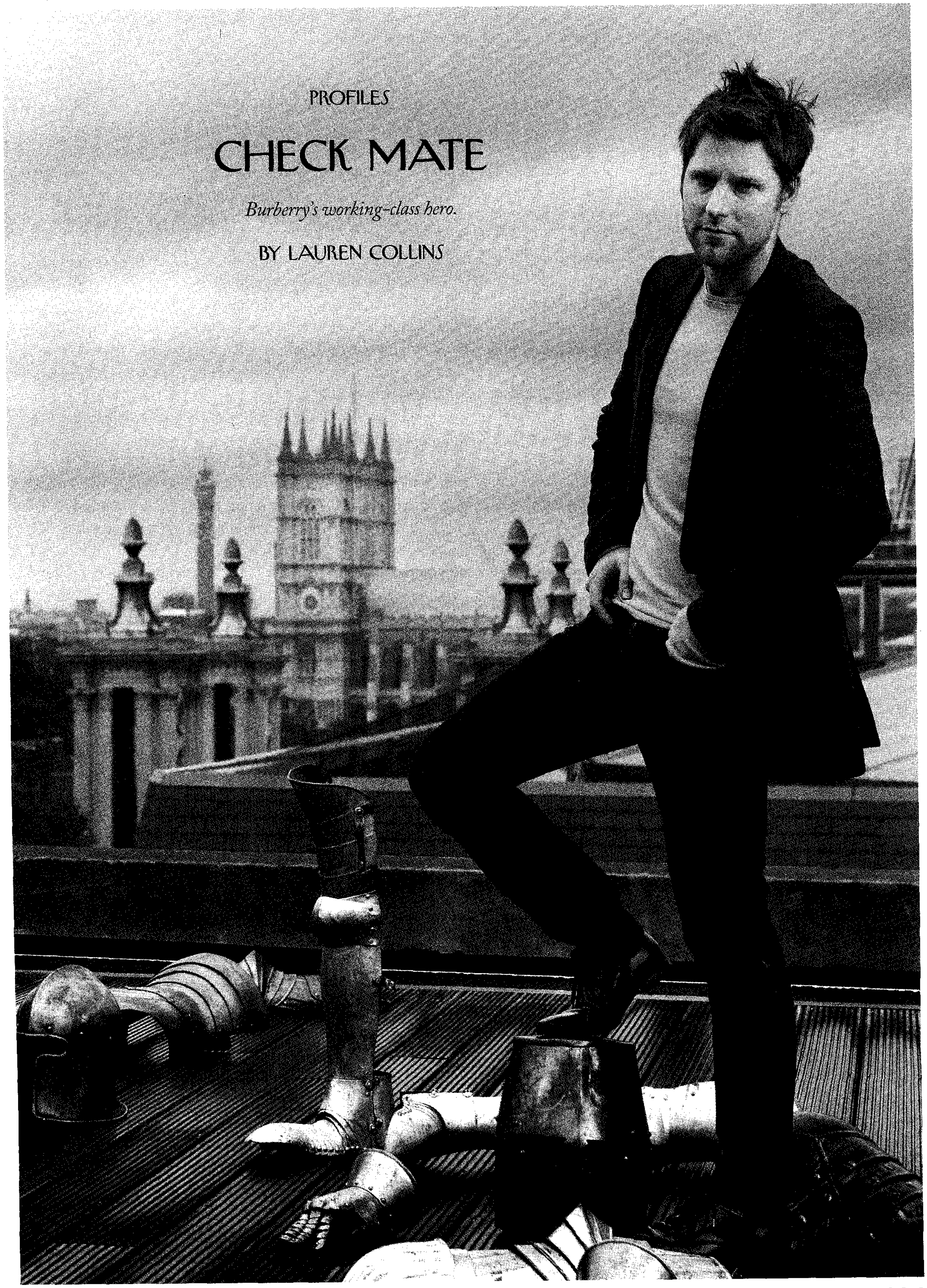
Christopher Bailey, with models wearing Burberry coats, at the company offices. Baile

PROFILES

CHECK MATE

Burberry's working-class hero.

BY LAUREN COLLINS



bout the trenchcoat: it's timeless, it's ageless, it's been worn by everyone from Princess Margaret to Sid Vicious. Photograph by Max Vadukul.

young people and young children.”

Since arriving at Burberry, in 2001, Bailey, who is thirty-eight, has gained a reputation for being, as *Details* put it last year, “the anti-designer.” It is true that he is unusually solicitous, not only by fashion-designer standards but even by human ones. “Do you want me to hold something?” he will inquire. “Are you cold?” “Would you like a biscuit?” Adrian Hallewell, a chauffeur in Yorkshire, who has known Bailey since he was a boy, told me, “He keeps a low profile, does Christopher.”

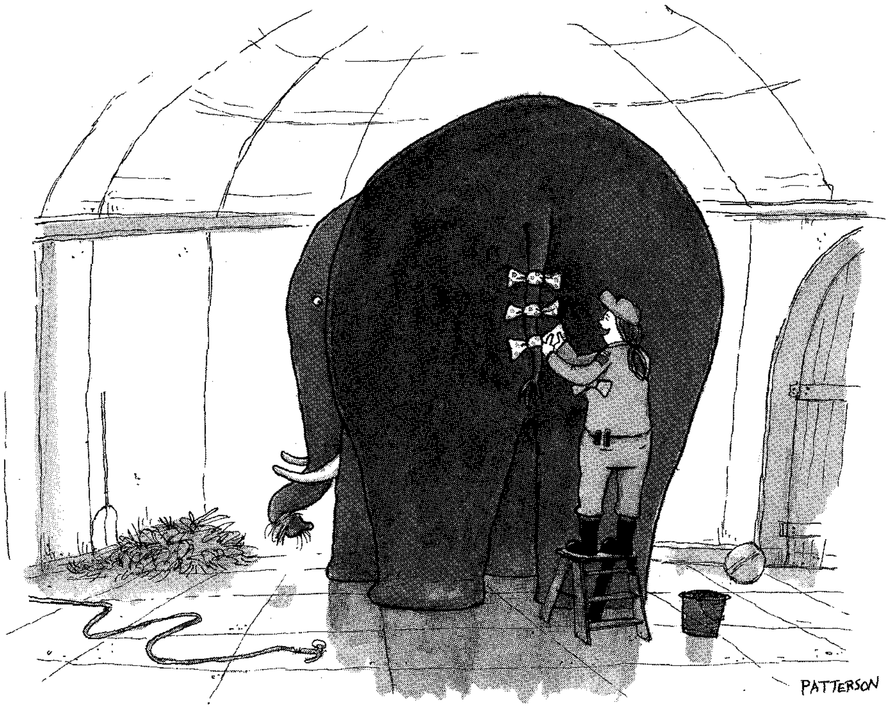
Bailey exudes, in the words of the fashion photographer Mario Testino, “a certain peace—you never really see him lose control, get annoyed, get hassled.” The sharpest words I heard him use were “not nice,” speaking of counterfeiters who have co-opted the check that has been the Burberry emblem since 1924. (If you haven’t been to Alice Tully Hall on a rainy night recently, the check consists of a camel-colored background hashed with a grid of black, white, and red stripes.) As the creative director of Burberry, Bailey oversees men’s and women’s collections for four clothing ranges—Burberry Prorsum, a high-fashion line, along with the more casual Burberry London, Burberry Sport, and Burberry Brit—a line of children’s clothing, a line of undergarments, eyewear, watches, perfumes, accessories, advertising campaigns, and, to a large extent, the brand’s image as projected by a hundred and eighteen retail stores, two hundred and fifty-three concessions, and eighty-four franchise outlets in twenty-five countries. One of his prime objectives for Burberry, a three-billion-dollar company, is for it to be “friendly and warm and embracing.” He told me, “I think there’s an expectation that all fashion companies have to be cold and austere and arrogant, and I just think there are other ways of doing things.” Still, Bailey is ambivalent about being cast as the Ryan Seacrest of the runway. He told me, of his nice-guy reputation, “I used to be kind of like, God, that’s really naff.”

Bailey’s aesthetic can be somewhat glum—“drab fab,” people said of a Prorsum show, last year, that featured knit caps, sooty colors, and a runway strewn with dry leaves. “Christopher has a soulful, reflective spirit,” Sally Singer, the fashion-news director of *Vogue*, told me. “He brought that to a luxury brand at just the right moment, when glitz and bling were on the way out, and he managed to do it in a way that was just downbeat enough.” Bailey is interested in paradoxes—“dishevelled elegance,” “real fashion things against things that have a sense of heritage.” His designs range from muddy floral dresses and luxurious, metallic trenches to, this season, pieces of jewelry inspired by barbed wire. Bailey told me, “I don’t believe that anyone is only super-girly and purely feminine, and only wants to be shy. There are different sides to all our characters.”

“I could never leave this place—this is where I grew up.”

Like a synesthete seeing letters in reds or blues, Bailey seems to divine sensory potentials in clothes. “I think, like, wood, or the smell of paper, or that kind of like foisty smell of an old attic,” he said. “Or a thick wool sweater—I want it to smell of wool and I want it to smell of sheep.” His theory of objects—scarves, chairs, marigolds, magpies, picture frames—is almost metaphysical. “Look, I love the way this has gone all shiny and waxed,” he said one day, running a pinkie against the collar of a weather-beaten Burberry trenchcoat. “It’s amazing, with age, how fabric changes. I always like things when they feel like they’ve had a life before.”

Bailey speaks of clothes in pathetic fallacies, attributing to them pasts and futures, personalities, souls. He practices a kind of reverse laundering: he dirties things up, endowing them with baggage and a backstory, most often in the Anglophilic mode. (Madonna, in her lady-of-the-manor phase, outfitted her daughter, Lourdes, in a Burberry kilt.) The British model Stella Tennant, who has been featured in many Burberry ads, and who, for a time, worked as a consultant for the company, used to bring in bits of country-house detritus—a floral-print bedcover, for instance, that her mother had sewn—that she thought Bailey might incorporate into his designs. “Before Christopher, they had a designer, Roberto Menichetti,” Tennant recalled. “He was great, but he was an Italian designer, and they have a completely different feel for clothes. It just made so much more sense having Christopher there, sort of a round peg in a round hole.” She continued,



“Who’s a pretty girl now?”

“Even though he can be quite fluid, there’s a structure to what he does, this underlying ghost.”

Last year, Bailey bequeathed the hardware, and the historical patina, of an old Burberry officer’s jacket to a pocketbook—the best-selling Warrior Bag, encrusted with pips. Dylan Jones, the editor of *British GQ*, said, “Christopher has helped make British fashion exciting again, not by reinventing the wheel, not by being all wiggy and multidirectional, but by inheriting a great British brand and making it relevant for the twenty-first-century customer.” In January, *Fashion Wire Daily* called Burberry’s men’s show—peacoats, cable sweaters, herringbone dress shirts—“a nostalgic reinterpretation and posh updating of the pre-war English worker, seen through the eyes of the sophisticated urban gent.” The hit item of the collection was a series of snoods. Bailey was inspired, he said, by a hooded parka that Burberry had made for Sir Ernest Shackleton on the eve of his attempted trek across Antarctica in 1914. “That’s what I get from the archives, more than ‘Oh, this is a nice detail,’ ” he told me. “Sometimes it’s the spirit of things.”

Few things please Bailey more than encountering his work in the nooks and crannies of the British experience—a trenchcoat draped over a Westminster politician’s arm, lining out; a checked scarf, worn as hijab, in the immigration queue at Gatwick. A small triumph of his career was spotting a checked purse that he had designed tucked under a table at a bar in Yorkshire. “It was this kind of skanky pub, and all of a sudden I was like, ‘It’s actually *amazing* that this little baby thing that I work on with my gang goes out into the world and then finds its way back to my home town,’ ” he said. “You want to know the story behind it.”

Up on the moors, Bailey pointed out landmarks—a wind farm, a lake. “There is such a romance here,” he said. He drove by a low drystone wall. Nearby, some cows were grazing. “They’re Herefordshire cows,” Bailey said. “I love these cows.”

May 28, 2009, was, by decree of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Burberry Day in New York City. At 9:23 P.M., Bailey flipped a switch to illuminate three fifty-foot-long signs, spelling out “BURBERRY” in white neon letters, on top of a skyscraper on Madison Avenue—the company’s new American headquarters. The building used to house *New York*, which had a billboard on the top, so the city had allowed Burberry to erect a sign of its own. When the sign lit up, the effect was almost colonial, the planting of a flag. The weather had gone Londonish, and Bailey was defending the Queen’s English. “People keep saying to me it’s a plaid, and I’m like, ‘No, it’s a *check!*’ ” he had said earlier that day.

Across the street, on the roof of the Palace Hotel, which had a good view of the sign, Burberry was hosting a party. A rock band from Yorkshire was playing, amid such guests as Orlando Bloom, Claire Danes, Hugh Dancy, Blake Lively, and, evidently, a lot of British people—shortly before ten, the bar reportedly went dry. “BURBERRY PARTY—SKYLINE GETS LIT, GUESTS DON’T,” one blog headline read. (A Burberry spokesperson says this is an urban legend.) Helpers trailed the celebrities with check-lined umbrellas. Waiters passed mini shepherd’s pies. Even the loudspeakers, wrapped in plastic, seemed to be wearing raincoats. After a while, the city itself, windowpanes and subway grates, started to appear tessellated—Burberry checks in steel and glass.

The party was a homecoming for Bailey, who began his career as a womenswear designer at Donna Karan. In 1993, Karan had visited the Royal College of Art, in London, where Bailey was a student. He showed her his portfolio. (He’d been thinking about Quakers, and, at the same time, North African and English culture, “these very strong tribal things.”) Bailey recalled, “We stayed there really late, and she took my picture, and said, ‘When you leave school, I want you to come work for me.’ ” Bailey had never been to New York. A year later, he was living in a sixth-floor walkup in Murray Hill. “New York was exactly how I hoped it would be, from the high-rise buildings to the steam coming out of the street, to the noise, to the people shouting at each other and swearing, and everyone walking so quick, to going into a deli,” Bailey said. “I remember almost rehearsing to myself what I wanted to say, like ‘*Pastrami on rye. Pastrami on rye.*’ ”

In 1996, Bailey moved to Milan, to work as a senior designer at Gucci, under Tom Ford. Bailey was attracted to Ford’s attention to detail, and to the vigor of the brand, but he didn’t identify with Gucci's decadent look. "While I couldn't relate to Gucci, I was inspired by it," he recalled. "It was, How to do that slick, sophisticated, modern glamour in a new way that wasn't just garish and wasn't just vulgar? I certainly didn't live that life—I just imagined it. I imagined, O.K., this sexy girl, what does she want to wear when she's in the office?"

Weather is to Burberry as sex was to Gucci: the thing without which it would be impossible to imagine the other. (Outerwear, as it's called, accounts for sixty per cent of the company's sales of women's clothing, and forty per cent of men's.) Burberry was founded in 1856, when Thomas Burberry, a twenty-one-year-old draper's apprentice, opened a small shop on the high street of a town called Basingstoke. From the beginning, Burberry dedicated himself to devising superior ways of protecting his clientele from the elements. "Open Spaces," a promotional book published by the company in the early twentieth century, noted:

> In the early phases of its development, the firm's progress was due not only to the assistance it was able to give explorers, pioneers, and big-game hunters in all parts of the world, but to its ability to meet the wants of ordinary men and women, engaged in the less formidable pursuits of pleasure or duty, but nevertheless subservient to the daily necessity of trying to solve the meteorological conundrums of our island Sphinx.

The elements, in particular, posed a challenge—not only to the British psyche but also to its immune system. People—and, with them, the empire—suffered when, in avoidance of the rain and cold, they wore poorly ventilated clothes and got overheated. Before the breathable waterproof coat became a fashion item, it was a medical and military imperative. In 1880, Burberry—inspired by "smock frocks," the loose linen garments worn by agricultural workers in Surrey—discovered that Egyptian cotton, when treated with a proprietary solution, kept rain out and let air in. He called the fabric gabardine. Another early corporate book, "Gabardine in Peace and War," reworked Napoleon's purported dictum: "An army goes upon its belly, but its skin must be covered." It asserted, of gabardine, "The direct benefits it has conferred upon the human race will, it is to be hoped, last quite as long as those derived from the world's decisive battles." Burberry was the DuPont of its day, both an enabler and an avatar of national progress.

Burberry established his first shop in London in 1891, at 30 Haymarket, in the city's West End. By then, Burberry's, as it was known, was offering kit "FOR SPORT, COUNTRY, TRAVEL, TOWN, MILITARY, and including COURT AND MUFTI." The company embodied the can-do spirit of the age. In 1910, it outfitted the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen with windproof anoraks for his expedition to the South Pole. "For sledge journeys, where one has to save weight, and to work in loose, easy garments, I must unhesitatingly recommend Burberry," Amundsen wrote. Burberry also equipped Robert Scott for his ill-fated Antarctic journey. A picture taken on January 17, 1912, shows Scott's sledge party posing at the bottom of the world. (Amundsen had beaten them by thirty-four days.) The men wear mufflers, and harnesses across their shoulders to support heavy mitts. Many of them had taken to tying gabardine bags around their fur boots, like gaiters. The temperature is twenty degrees below zero. A breeze ruffles the Union Jack, staked in the ice.

Amundsen and his ilk were the turn-of-the-century's Michael Jordans, and gabardine its Nike Airs. With the explorers' endorsement, Burberry's élite athletic apparel caught on with the leisure classes, becoming as coveted in the provinces as it had been at the poles. "It has saved me many a wetting, and doesn't give me a steam bath and a cold like my mackintosh did," T.H.W., from Sheffield, wrote, in a letter to the company, of his gabardine coat. J.W.B., of Horsham, attested, "It is splendid for walking, does not clog the legs, nor produce perspiration."

Equestrians, country doctors, hot-air balloonists, sailors, golfers, cyclists, and vicars all loved their Burberrys. The Prince of Wales ordered one. So did the Infanta of Spain, thirteen marquesses, and the Maharaja Bahadur, of Jammu and Kashmir. The magazine *Badminton* praised the coat for "keeping the wearer dry without baking, boiling, or stewing him." The coat, which *Court Journal* called "a veritable suit of mail," was said to protect against thorn, bramble, burrs, fish hooks, heather, tornadoes, monsoons, typhoons, dust, and rheumatism. The *Morning Post* sponsored a limerick competition:

> Said the Queen to Sir Walter, "I vow
> If the road's wet, I'll kick up a row."
> Said Raleigh, "Well, Liz,
> I don't mind if it is,
> I carry a 'Burberry' now!"

During the Boer War, British troops had taken to wearing a Burberry coat called the Tielocken, which fastened at the waist with a sash instead of buttons, providing wraparound coverage. (During the Matabele campaign, cavalry officers reportedly carried Tielockens rolled up on the pommels of their saddles.) Before the First World War, the British War Office commissioned Burberry to make a coat for its officers. Burberry added to the Tielocken silhouette shoulder straps (for epaulets) and D-rings (for satchels to hold hand grenades, compasses, canteens, or whatever else the subaltern required). The resulting garment, which was offered for private purchase, became known as the "trench coat." Later additions included gun flaps and cuff straps, the vestiges of which are visible in the coats that office workers favor today.

The Burberry diaspora, as evoked by testimonial letters sent to the company, mirrored Britain's: Salonika, Ceylon, Burma, Formosa, Constantinople, Borneo, the Orange Free State. From Somaliland, a Mr. Wm. Eglington wrote of having "gone through mimosas and the dreaded 'watch-een-beetje' bushes with the most perfect immunity, when other garments as well as khaki would have been torn to shreds." From South Africa came word of a "gallant little mare" whose owner had named her Gabardine.

Until recently, Burberry's worldwide corporate headquarters comprised five offices scattered around London, furnished in various schemes of wainscoting and brass. In November, amid the institution of a hundred-million-dollar cost-efficiency plan, the company moved to Horseferry House, a hundred-and-sixty-thousand-square-foot former government building in Westminster. (You have to spend before you save, the thinking apparently went.) The new building, designed by Bailey in collaboration with the architectural firm Gensler, houses eight floors of design studios, showrooms, and executive offices arranged around two light-filled atriums. Bailey attended to the most niggling details of its construction: glass doors on the premises feature, instead of what he called "the usual little circles or something horrible," required by safety codes, etchings of a stylized raker stripe, the red line that bisects the Burberry check.

One afternoon in July, Bailey greeted me in a reception room on the ground floor. He was wearing jeans, a T-shirt, green-and-black striped socks, and a tailored blazer. Rolling racks laden with selections from the Burberry archives lined the room. "Shall I show you around?" Bailey said. "Brilliant!"

During his first few months at Burberry, Bailey often took lunch in the archives—him, some coats, and a sandwich. Now he led the way toward a rack and pulled out a yellow trenchcoat, the color of corn. "This we made for 'Dick Tracy,' the movie, which is fun, no?" he said. He plucked another coat from the rack, a single-breasted orange number from the nineteen-forties. The coat looked blanched, as if it had sat out in the sun for days, or been dipped in salt water and allowed to dry. "I love this one," Bailey said. "What we did, one season, we worked with a textile company in Italy which does dyes reactive to light, to kind of give it the same effect."

At the Prorsum Autumn/Winter 2009 show in Milan.

JAMES COCHRANE/COURTESY BURBERRY

In the reception room, Bailey tugged at the sleeve of a coat. A manila tag attached to the collar said that it was from 1908 and had belonged to a member of the 18th Hussars. He plunged his hand into an internal pocket, which, he marvelled, had been designed deep enough to hold a newspaper. When Bailey becomes excited, he slides his feet wide, like a tennis player skidding on clay. By the time he brought up a very special entry in the Burberry collection—"I'll get into trouble if I say it, but, basically, it's the Queen's trenchcoat that she had when she was shooting, and it looks like there's some blood on it!"—he was practically doing a split.

Bailey has a spiel about the trenchcoat and, by extension, the Burberry brand: it's for the young, it's for the old, it's for the country, it's for the city, it's timeless, it's ageless, it's been worn by everyone from Princess Margaret to Sid Vicious. Until recently, though, Burberry was seen by the fashion world as a stodgy nonentity. In 1997, the company—which since 1955 had been owned by Great Universal Stores, a British retail conglomerate—hired Rose Marie Bravo, a Bronx-born former Saks Fifth Avenue executive, as C.E.O. Her mandate was to transform the company into a modern luxury brand. The next year, Burberry introduced Prorsum ("forward" in Latin) and changed its name, becoming, officially, Burberry, rather than Burberrys. It stepped up its marketing, hiring Mario Testino to shoot advertising campaigns, and populating the ads with aristocrats (Lord Frederick Windsor), models (Kate Moss), and aristocratic models (Stella Tennant). In September of 1999, when Hurricane Floyd hit the East Coast, Burberry gave trenchcoats to thirty New York fashion editors, according to Henrik Vejlgaard's "Anatomy of a Trend." (A basic model, the classic double-breasted trench, costs seventeen hundred and ninety-five dollars.) In 2002, the company went public on the London Stock Exchange. Between 2003 and 2006 the company's net profit quadrupled.

Bravo, who left in 2006, revived Burberry; the mission of her successor, Angela Ahrendts, as she put it in a recent report to shareholders, is "to purify the brand's message." Ahrendts, also an American, and a former Liz Claiborne executive, joined the company in 2006, at the urging—over a three-hour lunch at Asiate—of Bailey, who had worked with her at Donna Karan. Since taking over, Ahrendts has discontinued thirty-five of the brand's product categories. "We absolutely said we would eliminate what we called ancillary products," she told me. Bailey's task is to rid the company of aesthetic clutter. "Burberry used to do little bottles of whiskey," he said. "We're not experts on whiskey, so why the hell would we do whiskey?"

In 2006, Burberry announced that it would close a polo-shirt factory in an industrial area of Wales, eliminating three hundred jobs, which could be performed more cheaply elsewhere. Soon, the workers, sympathetic, cup-of-tea sorts, were protesting outside the factory. Prince Charles took up the cause, and the entertainers Emma Thompson, Ioan Gruffudd, and Tom Jones joined a campaign to "Keep Burberry British." Burberry closed the factory anyway. In 2008, Bailey told the *Daily Mail*, "We have two factories in Yorkshire—in Rotherham, which we saved from closure, and Castleford, where we make the iconic rainwear. We still use fabrics from the traditional cloth mills." A year later, Burberry announced that it would close the Rotherham plant. Many of the employees learned the news on TV. One machinist told the *Guardian* that the workers had taken to comparing themselves to mushrooms—"You know, kept in the dark and fed on whatsit."

Burberry, despite having earned more than two billion dollars in revenue for the first time, ended the 2008 fiscal year with a loss of eight million dollars. The deficit was not dire, or wholly unanticipated—there were the new buildings, and the institution of the cost-efficiency plan—but it reflected the soured economy, which has at least slightly dampened the company's ambitions. "We absolutely want to continue the retail expansion," Bailey told me. "Maybe it's not as aggressive as it was, but we still want to keep moving forward with it."

The thing, for a fashion house, about having a recognizable logo is that it's recognizable: Burberry at a glance. This can be a boon to its image: see Prince Charles and Princess Diana, wearing matching Burberry raincoats, umbrellas held aloft, on what looks like a dismal vacation in 1983, or Susan Boyle, post-spiffing, accessorizing her leather jacket with a Burberry scarf. During Rose Marie Bravo's tenure, the company strove for visibility, plastering the Burberry check on a string bikini. But the conspicuousness of the pattern also means that the company has little control over how it is seen, or on whom. Anthony Marshall, on the way to his trial for allegedly defrauding his mother, Brooke Astor, of millions of dollars, draped a Burberry coat over his arm. Presiding over the now infamous slaughter of Thanksgiving turkeys, Sarah Palin wore what appeared to be the company's cashmere muffler. A commenter, having watched the video online, wrote, "It's very thoughtful of Sarah that her Burberry scarf matches the bucket of blood in the background."

On October 31, 2002, the "EastEnders" soap-opera star Danniella Westbrook went shopping on Bond Street. The next day, a picture of her appeared in tabloids across England. Westbrook, who had just undergone an operation to repair her septum, damaged from years of cocaine use, wore knee-high boots, black windowpane tights, and a short pleated skirt printed in the beige-black-and-red Burberry check. She carried a Burberry-checked handbag, which blended into the Burberry-checked kilt that her one-year-old daughter was wearing, as Westbrook balanced her on a shoulder after lifting her out of a Burberry-checked pram. British people still haven't got over it. Last year, a poll by the *Sun* found "the infamous check pattern" the worst fashion faux pas of the past fifty years, beating out "the shell suit, puffa jackets, and even Crocs."

The Westbrook incident may have marked the beginning of what became a public-relations crisis for Burberry: the appropriation of the brand by the so-called "chav," which is British, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, for a "young person of a type characterized by brash and loutish behaviour and

HUNTER-GATHERER

(*After the art installation "Hunter-Gatherer," by Ellen Driscoll.*)

1.
Snow falling on the roof falls like it used to do
when freeze and thaw hardened to a satin sheen
and nothing moved in the offing but the lighthouse beam.

And so this morning is the morning of the heart
in which the vodka, talking shit all night,
dissolves into pure sunlight, purer thought,

and I'm not a whore and I'm not a bastard
and I wake clear-headed and see
above the clouds like a swept-bare prison yard

each cool hard instant of nothing but blank sky.
No sound of the All Clear, no need for intensity
or all the fake drama of some TV war. Just the eye

of the ocean staring through a neighbor's window
with a sense of absolution no one younger can ever know.

2.
Your snipers crouch on rooftops, your oil derricks
and McMansions gleam . . . You made it all from plastic,
scrounging water bottles at dawn with the other derelicts

and then cutting and gluing in the studio
your own slum of alabaster, your shining city
on the hill. Remember when I told you

in my aspiring bad boy way, how I found
in a footnote to "Of Plymouth Plantation"
the dissenter put to death with the cow he sodomized?

As if I'd made a dare, your eyes met mine,
then you went back to your drawing, your concentration,
now made perfect, cutting me down to size.

And the brown and blue ink flowing from your hand
mingled into lines only the ink could intend.

3.
I want to see you put on those boots again,
those ones we bought from the Farmers' Co-op
to tramp around mud-spattered fields.

I want to see you bend down and shove your toe
and thick sock into that green rubber sleeve
sheathing your foot and calf up to the knee

while you lean against me to steady your balance,
the two of us braced against each other
in sway and countersway, trust moving against chance

but nothing more at stake than what was always
at stake, life making its extensions,
then pulling back away—there we go across the water meadows

in slip and slop, hand in hand to see the manor house
the lord and lady pulled the roof off against the taxes.

4.
Light plashes down on your white plastic plain—
and no one knows the end, or how this war comes out,
or who's a casualty and who's not.

Your snipers take aim. Rifles gleam in the spotlights.
Your shantytowns transfigure into lustrous flows
of shadow that make the enemy hard to spot:

everything is camouflaged in light,
in hard-to-see-through veils of glare and dazzle.
And then the first shot's fired and in the split-second lull

before light explodes itself against light
and every light goes out, I see your careful silhouette,
head cocked to the side measuring the effect

of just how far is too far, how close too close
before such warring luminosities turn friend into foe.

—*Tom Sleigh*

the wearing of designer-style clothes." Others say that it all started with a ninety-dollar checked cap adopted by a group of football hooligans who called themselves the Burberry Boys and assaulted a busload of Turkish fans at an England-Turkey match. For that reason, or another, the hat became the favored accessory of chavs, or chavlike persons, just as chav culture—typified by WAGs (the purportedly label-mad wives and girlfriends of the English national-team players), Jade Goody, and "The Catherine Tate Show"—was becoming a phenomenon.

Burberry discontinued the hat in 2004, but the perception that the brand had descended into cheesiness had taken hold. In an article called "Burberry vs. the Chavs" (graphic: a woman with Burberry-patterned acrylic nails), the BBC Web site reported that pubs and clubs around the country had started to ban customers dressed in Burberry, and that the brand, "a victim of its own success," had become "something of a national joke." The Welsh rap group Goldie Lookin Chain offered for sale on eBay a "Chavalier"—a 1991 Vauxhall Cavalier replete with a checked paint job and, according to the listing, bottles of Carlsberg and lotto scratch tickets on the floor. (Burberry sued, successfully, to have the car destroyed.) A coffee shop in Kent added to its menu "chavuccino": coffee and Red Bull served on a Burberry-style napkin. Students at a boarding school conducted a "chav hunt," in which one side, dressed in hunting pinks, chased their Burberry-clad classmates on horseback. When the company's C.F.O., Stacey Cartwright, was asked about the chav problem by the *Independent*, in 2004, she replied, "It won't have helped, I'm sure."

Unlike the champagne producer Louis Roederer—which drew scorn from Jay-Z when, in 2006, its C.E.O. told a reporter that he viewed the hip-hop community's affinity for Cristal with "curiosity and serenity"—Burberry, smartly, has tried to present the dilution of its brand as a piracy issue: a scourge of undesirable products, not undesirable people. "I think that probably a lot of it was counterfeit," Bailey said, when I asked him about the perception of the brand as "checks for chavs." He went on, culminating in the observation that "the U.K. is about seven to ten per cent of our business, so, you know, it was just a little thing happening here." In any case, Burberry has become vigilant about its trademark. In 2005, the company threatened legal action against Ferret World, a pet shop in Dudley, West Midlands, for advertising fur-lined caps—for ferrets—"in the famous Burberry design."

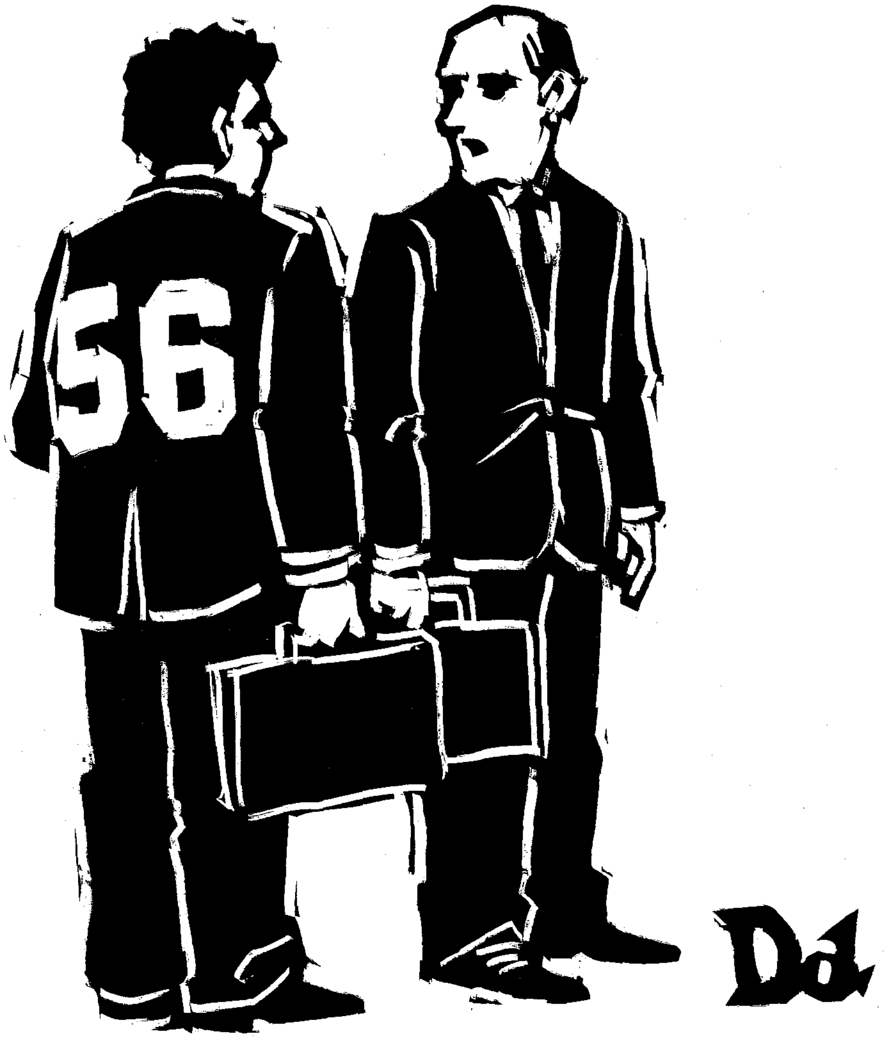
The idea that Burberry—at least in its mass-market incarnations—can lack edge, or sophistication, is not limited to the U.K. Part of this is the check, and particularly the checked scarf, a wintertime ubiquity in the commuting precincts of our Northeastern seaboard. (If you asked me to conjure a stereotypical Burberry-scarf wearer, it would be someone who spends a lot of time on the Acela shuttle between New York and D.C.) In 2007, a Boston Facebook user started a clothes drive he called "Burberry Scarves for Darfur": "You know what Darfur has too much of?" he wrote. "Genocide. You know what

Boston has too much of? Burberry scarves." In a way, Burberry is the English Ralph Lauren, a safe option that anyone can pull off. (Tony Blair, for instance, wore a check-placketed polo shirt for a visit to Silvio Berlusconi's villa.) Bailey once told a reporter, "I'm not somebody who believes in putting men in skirts." He is also not, however—as evidenced by a recent ad for Saks Fifth Avenue—averse to putting someone in a Burberry-checked high-top sneaker, "hand-sprayed to give it a slight degradé effect."

Bailey is a committed anti-élitist. "I'm not going to get into labels like WAG, because it's derogatory, and maybe I'm part of that culture, because I came from a working-class background in Yorkshire and now I eat at the Wolseley," Bailey told an interviewer, in 2007. Bailey's father, Doug, now retired, was a carpenter; his mother, Eliana, dressed windows for Marks & Spencer. Bailey, as a teen-ager, thought he might become a veterinarian. On weekends, he worked at a wedding-dress shop. "I had some of the most awkward moments in the middle of these two quite strong women, where the mother wanted her daughter to look absolutely Victorian and covered up to the neck, and the daughter wanted her boobs out," he recalled. "The biggest thing for me there was to understand the psychology of clothes."

Burberry has a long tradition of accessibility—"Everything will be marked in plain figures throughout the establishment," one of the company's early ads promised—and Bailey sees himself as a custodian of the idea that nice things aren't solely for people "with gazillions of pounds." His philosophy, he said, was stoked by an experience he had when he was sixteen and living in London, attending art school. He recalled, "My dad wanted to buy my mum a really beautiful watch from this designer store, and my dad sent me the money. And, you know, this was a really expensive watch. Maybe for other people it wasn't a lot of money, but in our world it was, and it was really special for my dad to be able to do this."

Bailey went to the store, dressed, "you know, like a normal person." He recalled, "The service was so intimidating and so unpleasant and so un-what-it-should-have-been. And I really wanted to call my dad afterward and say, 'Dad, it was amazing, and there was this and there was that!' But instead I was like, 'Oh, Dad, it was awful. It was horrible.' " It is Burberry company policy that several sizes of each garment be available on store floors so that customers don't have to talk to the salespeople if they don't want to.

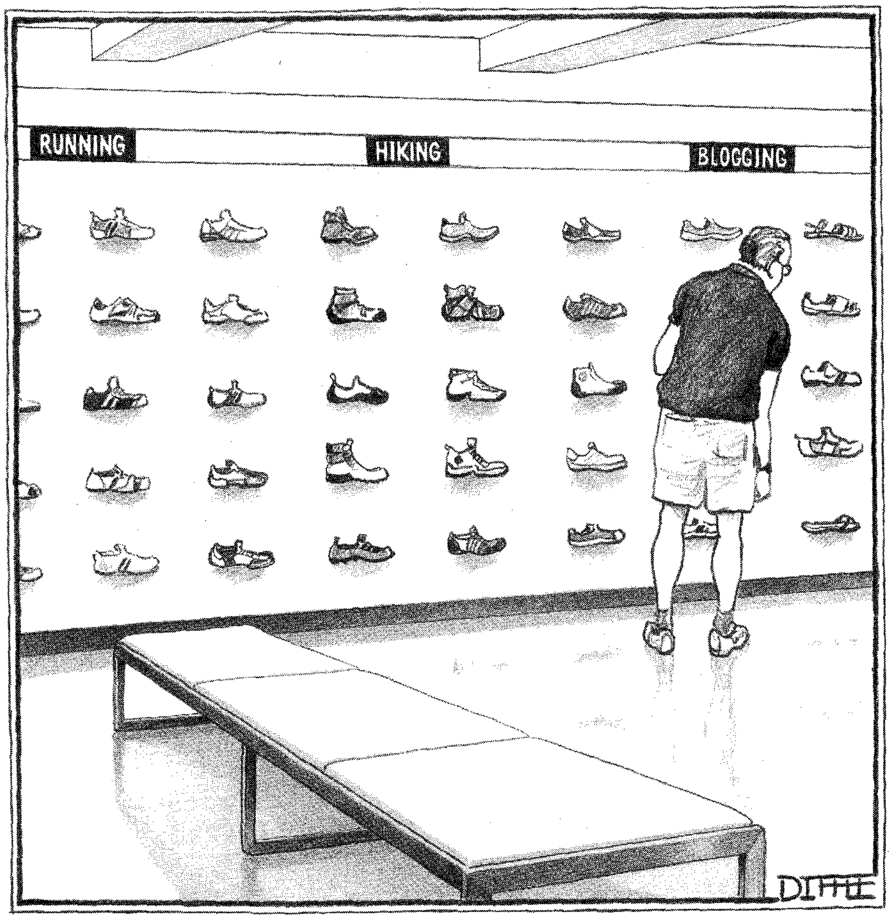


"You can have Burnett's old office and Burnett's old desk, but it's not right for you to have Burnett's old number."

Back at Horseferry House, in London, Bailey proceeded to a smallish, dark room: the company's in-house photo studio. "Basically, we set this up so we can control everything," he said. "We do all photo shoots here, we do everything for e-commerce here, we do post- and preproduction." Vertical integration is a familiar strategy in most industries, but Burberry is one of the few fashion companies to have embraced it. (Anything that saves money is considered inherently suspect by fashion's ancien régime.) Bailey entered another room, which contained what appeared to be a fake store window. It was. "What we do is create everything here, from lights to mannequins," Bailey said. The team at Horseferry, he explained, comes up with concepts for the company's store windows, builds them in three dimensions, and then sends photographs and detailed instructions for assembly to every Burberry store in the world. It was Bailey's idea to hold Burberry's store windows to the same level of standardization as, say, McDonald's hamburgers. "If I go to a Burberry store in Shanghai, I don't want to walk past their window and see a shabby version of this," he said.

In the company café, a few employees were having espresso. "*Buon appetito!*" Bailey said.

He walked over to a nearby console:



forks, napkins, microwave. "I hate microwaves," he said. "So, look, I did these!" He pressed a button, and the microwave disappeared behind a tasteful oak veneer. Recycling is mandatory in the building. To encourage paperlessness, Bailey had banished trash cans, and prohibited employees from having printers near their desks. Fashion people often display a willful ignorance about technology: the favored mode of communication among several titans of the industry is the fax. But Bailey calls himself "a bit of a nightmare kind of Google person," and has been known to stare at a computer, he says, "until I've got red eyes literally bulging out of my head."

Bailey is a pragmatist. "I love the whole creative process, but not in a kind of wanky way," he told me. His attitude toward his vocation is workmanlike. "I don't think you wake up and say, 'I'm feeling a little bit "Grey Gardens" today,' " he said. "I find it a bit contrived sometimes—for me. Everybody has a different process." (He is not above ginning up some references after the fact. A tip sheet distributed by Burberry revealed that inspirations for his Fall 2009 collection were, supposedly, Vanessa Bell, Virginia Woolf, and the Countess of Devon.)

In 2005, Bailey's partner, Geert Cloet, who worked as the brand director for Miu Miu, died, of a brain tumor. "Work was, absolutely . . . I buried myself in work," Bailey told me. "I just kind of threw myself into things, because, you know, I think sometimes there's a sense of failing."

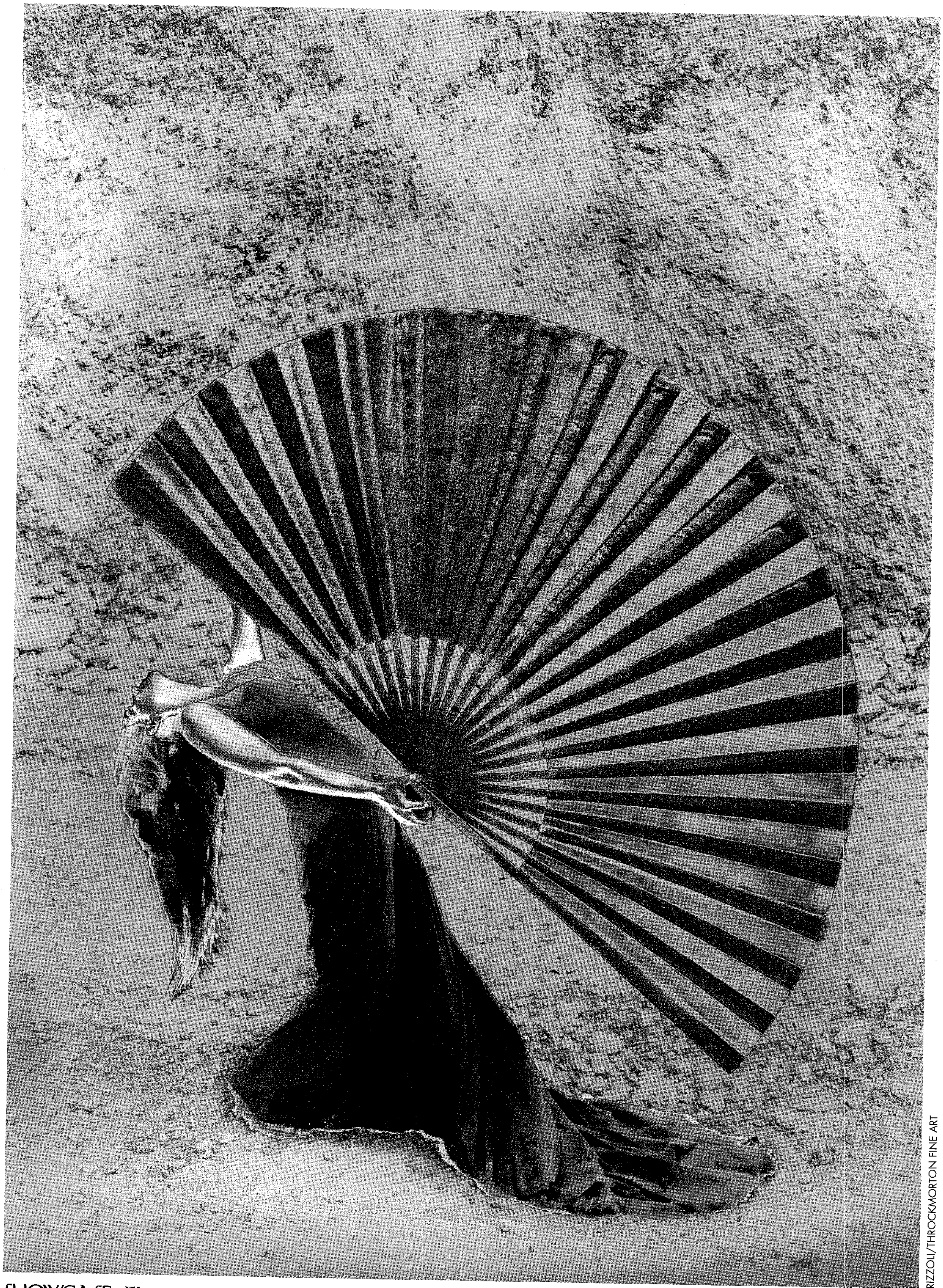
Bailey and his designers work in a series of studios on the seventh floor. In the knitwear section, Bailey stopped in front of an island table laden with fabric swatches. He homed in on a dusky-blue silk cotton and pawed at a string of light-blue sequins coiled on top of it. "We need to make it more three-dimensional," Bailey said. "We need more texture." He picked up the sequins and let them drop, as though he were making a drip castle. "But this is too much." Someday, this would become a sweater.

Nearby, a bunch of bags and belts sat on a counter. Bailey is an intuitive designer—a craftsman more than an artist, a learn-as-you-go tinkerer. To translate ideas into three dimensions, he and his design team practice a sort of fashion bricolage. "We might draw something, we might do it on the computer, sometimes we might make it out of paper," he said. He picked up a black leather purse. A thin strip of leather ran, veinlike, across the bottom. "Like this," Bailey said. "We often just start knotting and playing and then imagine, Hey, what if this was like this? And we often cello-tape things on and then carefully take them to the factory in Italy and say, 'O.K., how can we industrially do this?' "

He was unhappy with the vein. "Ugh, it's horrendous. It feels like it's stuck onto the bag, instead of part of the bag," he said. "So now I've just told the guys, let's just whipstitch it." Sitting nearby was a soft, slouchy tote bag, one of the most beautiful bags I have ever seen. It was made of yellow leather, pale as a sorbet, and its surface had been shaved, or chiffonaded, so that it appeared to be covered in thousands of eyelashes.

A small staircase led to a roof terrace. From it, we could see the Houses of Parliament, Lambeth Palace, the London Eye Ferris wheel glinting in the sun. Bailey walked toward a ledge and looked out at the Thames. "I remember very vividly I grew up in a bedroom that was, I mean, literally, from here to there," he said, tracing a perimeter on the wooden deck with his foot. "On the wall I would make collages. I remember I once found this really beautiful chain and hammered it into the wall. My dad went ballistic, and my mother tried to say, 'Leave him, he's got to express himself,' and my dad thought I was a nutter." He continued, "It's all kind of a dream for me."

After a few minutes on the roof, we went to Bailey's office. Neil Young was playing on an iPod. Some Maltesers sat on top of an otherwise immaculate desk. "Would you like coffee, water, tea?" Bailey asked, after apologizing to his secretary for running late. I said I'd like some water. Bailey got the water, and, pouring, missed the glass. In a second, he was down on his knees, cheerfully blotting the puddle with a paper towel. ♦



RIZZOLI/THROCKMORTON FINE ART

SHOWCASE *Flamenco—in particular, the women who perform it—has fascinated the Colombian photographer Ruven*

Afanador since he heard stories of Spain as a child. He reinterprets the art in "Mil Besos," a book of portraits coming out this fall.

ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

ROAD SHOW

The journey of Robert Frank's "The Americans."

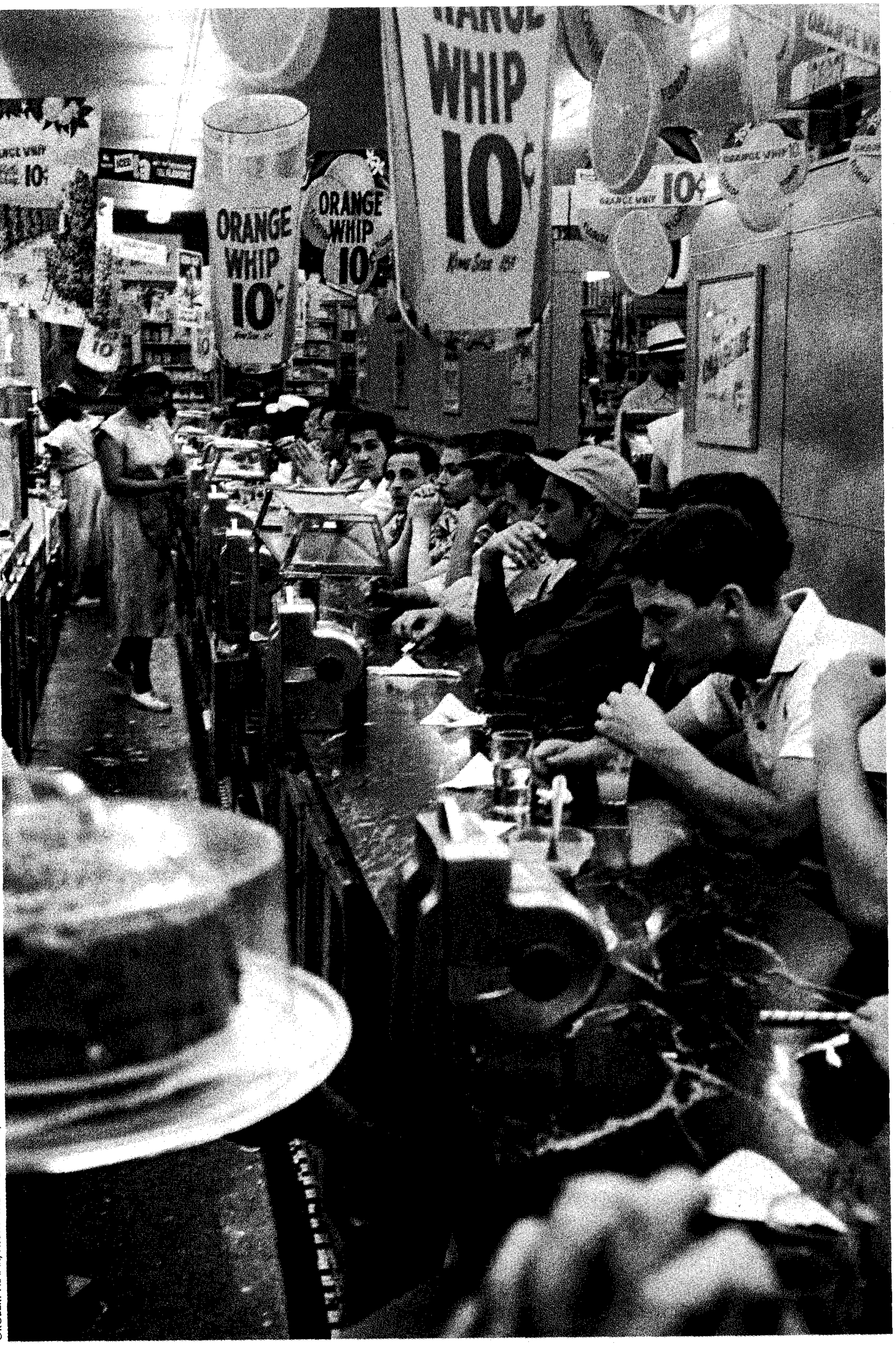
BY ANTHONY LANE

In June, 1955, Robert Frank bought a car. It was a Ford Business Coupe, five years old, sold by Ben Schultz, of New York. From there, Frank drove by himself to Detroit, where he visited the Ford River Rouge plant, in Dearborn, as if taking the coupe home to see its family. Later that summer, he headed south to Savannah, and, with the coming of fall, set off from Miami Beach to St. Petersburg, and then struck out on a long, diversionary loop to New Orleans, and thence to Houston, for a rendezvous with his wife, Mary, and their two children, Pablo and Andrea. Together, they went west, arriving in Los Angeles in the nick of Christmastime. They stayed on the Pacific Coast until May of the following year, when Mary and the children returned to New York. Frank, however, still wasn't done. Alone again, he made the trip back, going via Reno and Salt Lake City, then pushing north on U.S. 91 to Butte, Montana. From there, it was a deep curve, though a swift one, through Wyoming, Nebraska, and Iowa to Chicago, where he turned south; at last, by early June, Frank and his Ford Business, his partner for ten thousand miles, were back in New York. It had been a year, more or less, since he embarked, and there was much to reflect upon. Luckily, he'd taken a few photographs along the way.

In fact, he took around twenty-seven thousand. There were more than seven hundred and sixty rolls of film to develop: an impressive tally, even to snap-happy profligates of the digital age. Then there were contact sheets to print and mark up; from those, he made a thousand work prints, which were tacked to the walls of his apartment on Third Avenue, near Tenth Street, or laid flat on the floor for closer inspection, before being whittled down to a hundred. The final count, from all those months on the road, was eighty-three pictures: enough for a slim book, which was published in November, 1958, in Paris, as "Les Américains," and here, in January, 1960, as "The Americans." For his pains, Frank was paid two hundred dollars in advance, a sum that rose to just over eight hundred and seventeen dollars by the end of the year. By then, the book was out of print.

And now look at it. Back on the walls again, not of his apartment—at eighty-four, he divides his time between New York and Nova Scotia—but of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where "Looking In: Robert Frank's 'The Americans'" runs from September 22nd through January 3rd. Before that, it showed at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and, back in January, at the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, where Sarah Greenough, the senior curator of photographs, put together the exhibition

"Drug Store—Detroit" (1955), opposite, and Frank in 1956. To the earliest viewers of "The Americans," he was the enemy within.


ORANGE WHIP 10¢
King Size 15¢
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©ROBERT FRANK, FROM "THE AMERICANS"; OPPOSITE: WAYNE MILLER/MAGNUM

and edited the catalogue—a beast of a book, more than five hundred pages long, stacked with a dozen essays, reproductions of letters and contact sheets, early Frank, late Frank, and, most helpfully, a map. Inside every fat volume, of course, a thin one is signalling quietly to get out, and, tucked away inside this hulk, not even starting until page 209, is the source of the fuss: the original pictures, of a burnished black-and-white, in all their roaring silence.

Here, for example, is Butte, which Frank reached in May, 1956. Not a human in sight, though the imprint of human activity could hardly be more pronounced: a row of receding roofs and a line of cars on a cloth-gray street, at the end of which, in softer, pencilled tones, come the disfigured slopes of a copper mine. Drawing the eye, toward the top, is a plume of bright smoke, and, framing the whole design, as translucent as a bridal veil, are two thin patches of drape, left and right: "View from Hotel Window," the title reads, and we realize that here is our human after all. We are sharing the gaze not just of Robert Frank but of every traveller who has ever woken in an unfamiliar town, moved blearily to the light, and shivered at the depths of his unwelcome. Others have tasted the same bleakness:

> Flowered curtains, thin and frayed,
> Fall to within five inches of the sill,
>
> Whose window shows a strip of building
> land,
> Tussocky, littered.

That is from "Mr Bleaney," composed by Philip Larkin in the year before Frank's stay in Butte, and, with its musings on a man who "lay on the fusty bed / Telling himself that this was home," it accords with the gloomy, monkish pleasure, as bitter as old marmalade, that Englishmen of a certain bent have always taken in the Spartan deficiencies of their land. But Frank was in America, on the verge of Eisenhower's second term, when the deficient was not to be relished but redeemed and made good. Just consider the next photograph in the sequence: unpopulated, again, and filled to the brim with the window grid of the Metropolitan Life building, in New York. In front of us, at street level, is a vender's rack of magazines, their names alight with exhortation and plaudit: *See*, *Whisper*, *Tan*, *Amazing*, *Fantastic*. (And is that really one called *Gay Love*, tucked in below a book of crosswords?) Bottom right is *U.S. News & World Report*, with its infinitely consoling headline: "IKE'S PLAN TO AVOID A WAR."

The question to be asked of Robert Frank was whether he and his photographs, with their cool and color-free stares, had by design set out to disturb the peace. The cops certainly thought so in McGehee, Arkansas. On November 7, 1955, two patrol cars stopped him on U.S. 65. They checked his registration and his luggage, then drove him to the city jail and locked him up. Frank, writing two days later to his friend and mentor Walker Evans, takes up the story: "That was 12:30 P.M. I did ask, if I could have some coffee (I had nothing to eat since 6 AM that day) but the answer was that if I would not be quiet they would teach me how to be quiet." The patrolmen didn't like the look of this guy, or the sound of him, or the fifth of Hennessy they found in his glove compartment ("Foreign whiskey," Frank wrote, mixing his drinks). He was fingerprinted and asked to hand over his rolls of exposed film, which he refused to do. Years later, he recalled the exchange with the authorities:

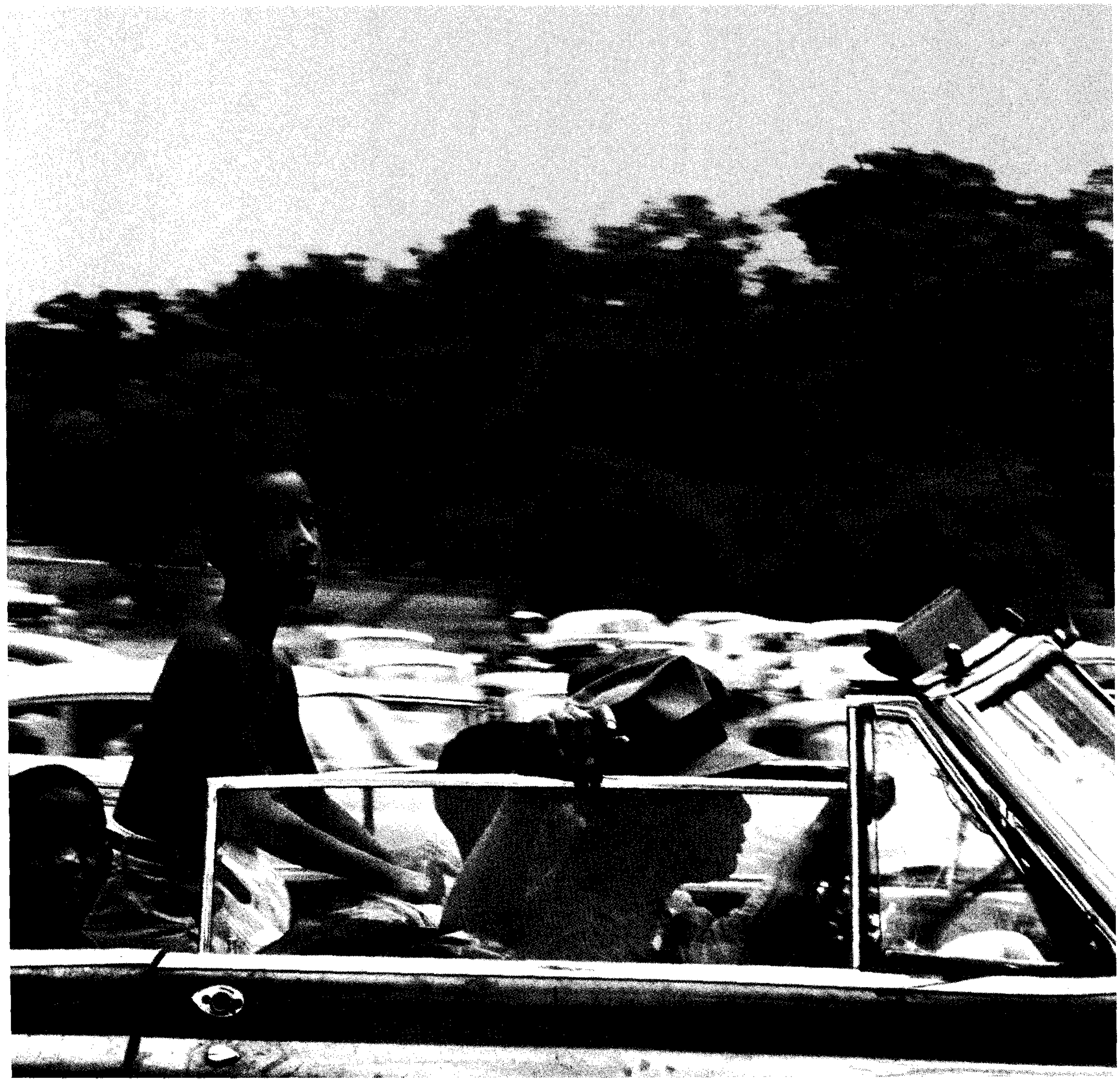
> "What are you doing here?"
> "I have a Guggenheim scholarship."
> "Who's Guggenheim?"

"Belle Isle, Detroit" (1955). We should not l

Frank presented a problem, first for the Arkansas police and then, when "The Americans" came out, for the critics. Like his brandy, he was foreign. He was a Swiss Jew, born in Zurich in 1924 to a Swiss mother and a German father, and thus of ever more precarious status as his first twenty years unfolded, even in a middle-class family under the wing of a neutral state. Not long after the war ended, he left. "I didn't know exactly what I wanted, but I sure knew what I didn't want." (Another judgment was yet more succinct: "How can one be Swiss?") His boat docked in New York in the spring of 1947, a time and place that must rank as one of history's better cures for restlessness. "Coming to America felt like the door opened—you were free," he told a British television crew in 2004, still buoyed by the liberty more than half a century later. On that maiden trip, he bore with him the fruits of a rigorous apprenticeship with Swiss photographers: a private book entitled "40 Fotos," not published but spiral-bound, and strong enough to win him a staff job with Alexey Brodovitch, the art director of *Harper's Bazaar* and a demigod of energy, equipped with a fearsome eye. Maybe, in retrospect, it wasn't such a good idea to head south, in 1955, with an admiring reference from a fellow with a Russian name. You didn't get many Brodovitches in McGehee. As Frank told Evans:

> The lieutenant leand back and said: Now we are going to ask you a question: Are you a commie? I said no. He said, Do you know what a commie is? I said yes.

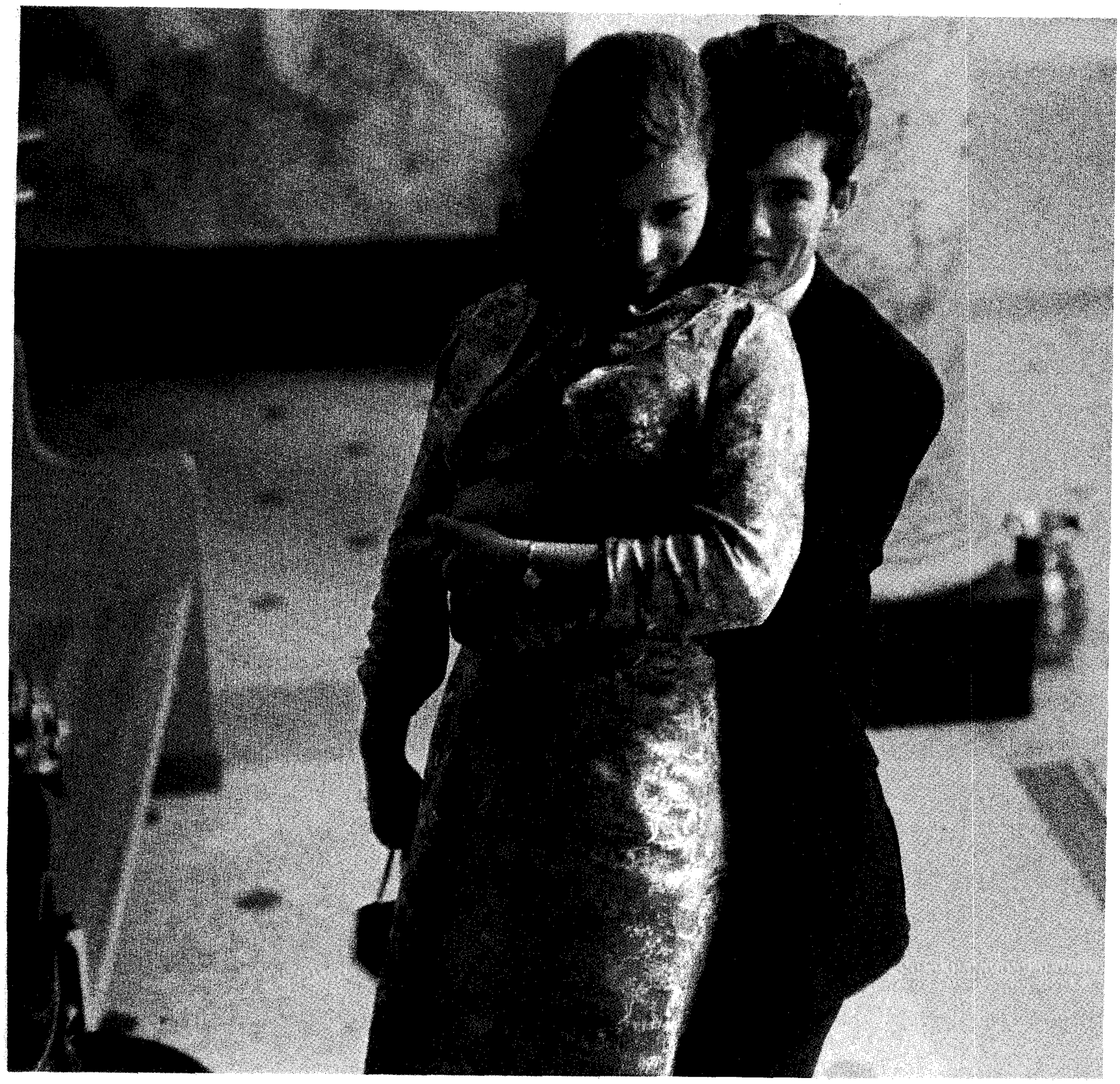
Brodovitch was one of five supporters for an application that Frank submitted to the John Simon Guggenheim Foun-



ur own conscience to reconstruct Frank's book as an exercise in raising awareness or stoking the flames.

dation in the autumn of 1954; others included Evans and Edward Steichen. If Frank, not yet thirty, could count on the endorsement of older figures as august as these, it was because he had in the preceding years built up a broad and muscular body of work, not just in New York but on prolonged, irregular trips back to Europe, plus half a year in Central and South America. His Guggenheim project, which was approved in April, 1955, and renewed a year later, was to record "what one naturalized American finds to see in the United States that signifies the kind of civilization born here and spreading elsewhere." We need to tread carefully here, because most of the wording is by Evans, who redrafted Frank's submission and smoothed over the cracks in his English. (And preëmpted his naturalization; Frank was not yet a citizen.) But Evans was acute enough, and generous enough, to pinpoint what mattered in Frank: the highly selective prying ("finds to see"); the quizzical angle most likely to be struck by a stranger fresh to the heartland; and, in the putative catalogue of subjects that Evans compiled—"a town at night, a parking lot, a supermarket, a highway, the man who owns three cars and the man who owns none, the farmer and his children, a new house and a warped clapboard house, the dictation of taste, the dream of grandeur"—an uncanny soothsaying of the themes that did indeed roll through "The Americans."

Thus it is that we find ourselves on the hood of a brand-new car, peering in. The paintwork is no more than a tenebrous gleam, but the interior is creamy with light, sufficient to illuminate the driver's profile, and the solemnity of the two passengers in the rear. None can be more than twelve years old, for these are kids, playing at being their fathers—or richer, harder versions of their fathers—inside a show car at the Los Angeles Motorama of 1956. One of them looks



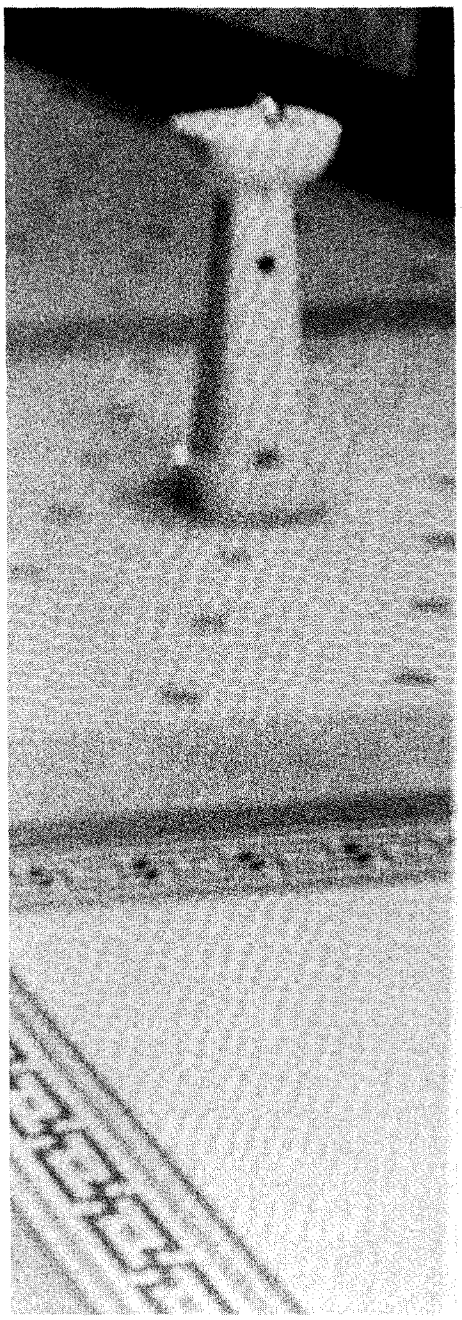
"City Hall—Reno, Nevada" (1956). No wonder that Frank so despised the heartening photographic layouts in Life—"those god-dan

straight at us, knowing no fear, half of his face concealed in shadow; if you want to know what Michael Corleone was like as a child, here, indelibly, is your answer. Was there ever a book as full of looking as Robert Frank's? Every kind of eyework is here, from the brief glance to the loaded iron glare and the mask of attentive purpose. A few looks are addressed to us, like that of the Hispanic dandies of New York, with their arching eyebrows, or the coiffed biker swivelling in his saddle to meet the lens head on, but many more are directed offstage, away from the frame, the scariest example being the Hollywood waitress with frozen pupils, vampire lips, and signs above her head for hot dogs and beefburgers ("Absolutely No Fillers Used Whatsoever"). Is she dreaming of distant shores, or is there nothing, no fillers whatsoever, beneath that unbreakable glaze?

To the earliest viewers of the book, there was no doubt. Frank was a hater and an agitator, the enemy within. Sarah Greenough rounds up the more outraged reviews: "A slashing and bitter attack on some U.S. institutions"; "A Degradation of a Nation!"; "a sad poem for sick people." In short, "The Americans" was un-American. What was the source of that riling? What nerves were being hit by the "Swiss Mister," as *Photo Arts* labelled Frank when it printed some of his work? A full answer would have to reach back at least a hundred years—to the first edition of "Leaves of Grass," and its clarion call of exhilaration. Whitman, like Frank, unrolled a litany of the visages and everyday deeds that would rise up and meet the traveller. The land of opportunity, for the poet, offered the chance not just to make something of yourself but to make common cause with other selves:

> Sauntering the pavement or riding the country byroad here then are faces,
> Faces of friendship, precision, caution, suavity, ideality,

© ROBERT FRANK, FROM "THE AMERICANS"



es with a beginning and an end."

The spiritual prescient face, the always
welcome common benevolent face,
The face of the singing of music, the
grand faces of natural lawyers and
judges broad at the backtop,
The faces of hunters and fishers, bulged at
the brows . . . the shaved blanched
faces of orthodox citizens.

Once sounded, that note of brotherly encouragement ("I see them and complain not and am content with all") never died; watch John Ford's film of "The Grapes of Wrath," and you find the title's fury starting to ease in the gentle framing of the Joads' resilient expressions, and in the sense that every searcher, even in hours of wretchedness, could take heart from the swell of fellow-feeling. When Frank set off, however, exactly a century after the publication of Whitman's "psalm of the republic," he stumbled into solitudes. From them he forged what Evans called the "ungentle poetry" of "The Americans," and, years later, slipping into the historic present (the most comfortable tense for a photographer), Frank recounted his modus operandi: "I go into post offices, Woolworths, 10 cent shops, bus stations. I sleep in cheap hotels. Around 7 in the morning I go to a nearby bar. I work all the time. I don't speak much. I try not to be seen."

If Frank didn't talk to his subjects, how many of them wanted to talk back? A bunch of high school boys in Port Gibson, Mississippi, told him he looked like a Communist and suggested that he "go to the other side of town and watch the niggers play." Meanwhile, his camera delved into the spaces between people—even people who were physically jostled, cheek by jowl—and found them riddled with mistrust. Hence the starlets, or the stars-in-waiting, who attend a movie première in Los Angeles: one of them gazing proudly to her left, with the first twinge of desperation, as if praying to be observed by somebody of note; the other no more than a shimmering blur, with Frank's lens focussed instead on the fans behind, one of whom, a half-bedraggled soul, chews her nails, an autograph pen gripped in her fist. Skip ahead a couple of pages and you land at the lunch counter of a drugstore, in Detroit. Every stool is taken; the customers are waiting for their orders, two of them clasping their hands as if saying grace. Half of them look straight ahead, like drivers in dense traffic; not one seems to be talking to his neighbors. As Greenough suggests, this broken togetherness would have been bewildering to one who grew up amid the café society of Europe, with its binding hubbub.

Mind you, what would the diners say, if quizzed on their silence? Maybe they just came off a noisy shift, and could use a minute's peace; maybe they're simply tired and hungry; maybe, with a grilled-cheese sandwich and a cup of coffee inside them, they might warm up, and, if the man with the camera returned in half an hour, he would walk into a perfect storm of yakking. Whenever I see Frank's photograph, with its citrus slices of cardboard or plastic dangling overhead, I think of "The Blues Brothers," and John Candy briskly ordering drinks for himself and a couple of cops: "Orange whip? Orange whip? Three orange whips." For every segment of melancholia that Frank cut from America, in other words, America could dish up a comic response, or at least an upbeat equivalent. When he picked up a pair of hitchhikers and allowed one of them to drive, the sideways image that he took shows the driver—a dead-eyed ringer for Richard Dreyfuss in "Close Encounters of the Third Kind"—in determined profile. Check the contact sheet at the back of the catalogue, and you come across the succeeding frame: same angle, same guy, but now with a definite grin—closer in mood, instantly, to the Dreyfuss who gunned his truck in pursuit of the alien craft, his face lit with chirpy wonder. Then there is the heroine of "The Americans," an elevator girl from Miami Beach, of whom Jack Kerouac asked, in concluding his introduction to the U.S. edition:

> And I say: That little ole lonely elevator girl looking up sighing in an elevator full of blurred demons, what's her name & address?

Again, it is worth consulting the relevant contact strip: fourteen shots of the same woman, at least half of them catching her in the act of a smile—a polite gesture adopted for those riding beside her, you might say, but then professional courtesy is no less a national trait than the ruefulness on which Frank preferred to focus. For every little ole lonely girl, there will have been a dozen young elevator operators as perky and unslumped as Shirley MacLaine in "The Apartment" (1960), fending off the office demons and fighting down their disappointments. Such is one definition of "The Americans": a sheaf of stills from a film that was never made—or a film that was made but never released, after the studio heads, examining a rough cut, discovered that every scene had been shot at just the wrong time, when the smiles of the stars and the chatter of the extras had yet to kick in, or had already started to fade. The happiest picture in "The Americans," entitled "City Hall—Reno, Nevada," shows a couple, presumably just married, with a water fountain where they might have hoped for an altar. Only at a pinch does their posture seem like celebration; he hugs her as you do when pulling someone back from the brink. Does she look down out of shyness, or into the future's gulf? No wonder that Frank so despised the heartening photographic layouts in *Life*—"those goddamned stories with a beginning and an end."

To a European eye, this insistence on open endings, and on feelings that could at any point fluctuate and sink, was the outcome neither of satire nor of perversity; it was known as realism. "There is only one thing you should not do, criticize anything," Frank said of America, writing to his parents in Zurich, a week after he had first arrived in New York. I would argue that, despite the rumpus raised by his book, he obeyed his own command, and that "The Americans" is a work not of criticism but of a painful and unblinking honesty. What has happened to it, over half a century, is that its legion of admirers has not essentially displaced the claims of its early detractors; both proceed on the assumption that Frank *was* severely critical, and the sole difference between the two schools is that the modern fans accept the criticism as thoroughly deserved. The country, in short, was asking for it:

> Like the opening stanzas in an epic poem, the first chapter reveals the themes the book will explore: the immense, even ruthless power of the country's political, military, and business leaders; the lack of power of its poor; the alienation of its youth; the isolation of its wealthy; the boredom of its middle class; and the ineffectiveness and lack of true insight of all.

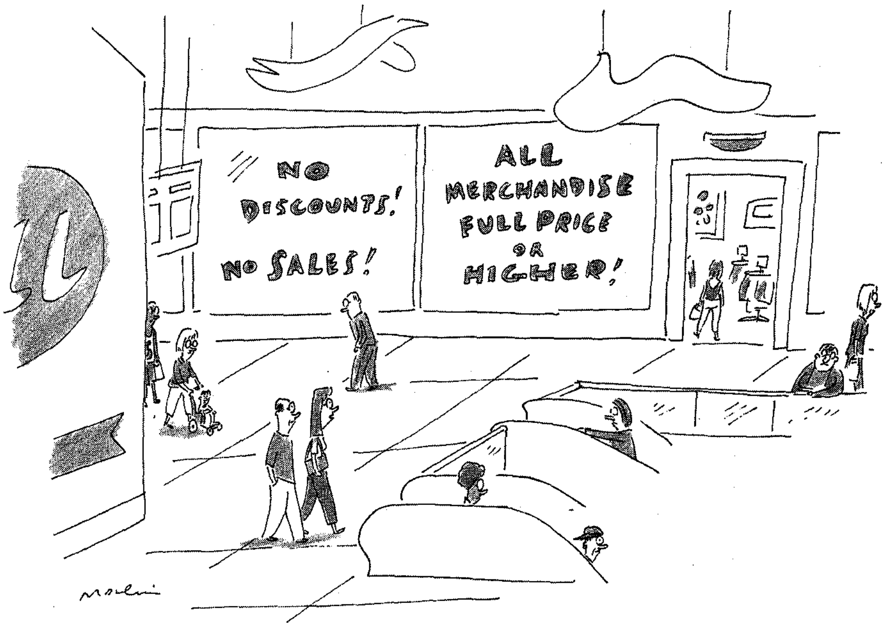
Yikes. Of *all*? That is Sarah Greenough, who tellingly refers to "The Americans" as if it were literature, complete with chapters. Those depicted in it, she writes, "often mindlessly obey the dictates of others," and "hawk their deepest religious beliefs as casually as any other commodity." Her case is compellingly put, and backed by most of her fellow-contributors; I only wish I could find the evidence. When Frank photographed the factory floor at the Ford River Rouge plant, the outcome, according to Greenough, shows men "enmeshed by machinery and surrounded by a hellish chaos." But that cannot be so. If it were chaos, no cars would be built. And if it were hell the plant would be closed and the men would be out of a job, with no means of feeding their families. Maybe 1955, in the glory days of auto manufacture, seemed infernal to some in Michigan, but that still leaves you with the deeper devastation of today.

What pulls me into the picture is the fuzz of its focus and the murk of its grain; Frank was using Kodak Tri-X, a famously tolerant film, which only proves how low the light was on the assembly line. Sometimes, to judge by the contacts, he switched to Plus-X, a slower emulsion, but nobody in the catalogue can tell us whether this was a deliberate choice, or a simple matter of loading what came to hand. Again, what lens did he fit to his Leica for the River Rouge shot? Much of "The Americans," I would guess, was shot on 50-mm. or wider, but the way in which the Ford workers are stacked up tight suggests a short telephoto lens; if museumgoers are informed, by a small plaque, that a painting was executed in egg tempera, or oil on poplar, why should lovers of photographs be left in the dark? These things matter, whenever battle is joined over art. It matters, for instance, that Jasper Johns's "Flag," on which he labored from 1954 to 1955, was painted in oil and encaustic, a wax-based medium: first, because it allowed him to embed barely visible scraps of newsprint beneath the pigment, like messages from the journalistic beyond, and, second, because the rough stickiness of the surface—so uncomfortable a contrast to the dry nap of an actual Stars and Stripes—added to people's genuine unease about whether he was paying due homage or making insubordinate sport.

"This one, when you open it, smells like the Times."

Within the year, Frank, too, was weighing the iconography of the same flag; unlike Johns, he was not brought up to honor it, and so, when he elected to open "The Americans" with a shot of the flag, flapping between two women as they watch a parade in Hoboken, and chopping one of them off at the head, was that not a mischievous statement? He then studded the book, at intervals, with other flag pictures; in one of them, two little girls in white party dresses, holding balloons, skip beneath a vertically hung flag—patched and worn, so that we can see through to the trees behind. This strikes me as a crux. If you believe that Frank's exposures were just that, exposing the threadbare values of a society deluded by its satisfactions, this picture would be Exhibit A; but it will suit your purpose, equally, if you happen to view transparency as a virtue, or take pride in a country's devotion to the homespun. Those girls in white are having fun.

Johns's great painting, now at the Museum of Modern Art, was turned down by the MOMA trustees when it was first considered for purchase, in February, 1958, for fear that it "would offend patriotic sensibilities." As for the offense caused by "The Americans," it was short-lived, not enough to sell a complete print run of the first edition, still less to inflame a nation. Jeff Rosenheim, in his catalogue essay on Frank and Walker Evans, reminds us that, as Frank was heading west toward Las Vegas in December, 1955, the breaking news was of Rosa Parks and the start of the Montgomery bus boycott. There is no denying the compassionate vigor with which Frank attended to the experience of black America; once again, though, we should not be led by our own conscience to reconstruct the book as an exercise in raising awareness or stoking the flames. Frank didn't set out to address an issue; he was just looking, and reporting back. That is what realists do. That is what makes him so clear and incontestable a witness, and he stands by his testimony. “What a lonely time it can be in America, what a tough country it is,” he said in the British documentary five years ago, adding, “I saw for the first time the way blacks were treated. It was surprising to me. But it didn't make me hate America. It made me understand how people can be.”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“I guess the economy is getting better.”

Such is the attitude that was given crystalline form in “The Americans,” and that now adorns the walls of the Met: surprise and comprehension. Needless to say, we are at liberty to react with indignation to what the photographer displays, but that is our business, not his. A black waitress, dead on her feet in the Detroit drug store, serving a row of whites; an older black woman, alone on a chair in a meadow, one hand pressed against her stiff back at the close of a working day, and behind her a setting sun and a telephone pole like a cross; an unflinching image of a black nanny in Charleston, South Carolina, her features as starched and dignified as her summer dress, cradling a plump white baby who stares in another direction altogether, as if toward a fate very different from hers: these are magnificent allegories of fortitude and patience, but they are first and foremost portraits of individual souls, and we lean too heavily on hindsight, I think, if we read them as self-evident clues to the moment when the patience expired and a culture exploded onto the streets. Our own prejudices, however benign, continue to lead us astray, as Greenough smartly points out, in a footnote on Frank's crisply composed picture of three guys in dark suits, two in hats, two leaning against a car: “The African American men in this photograph have often been misunderstood as chauffeurs waiting for their white employers at a funeral. . . . However, as the contact sheet clearly indicates, they are not chauffeurs but are attending an African American funeral.”

All lives, you might say, exist to be enjoyed and mourned, as well as merely endured. That is why Frank could find space not just for the downtrodden but for the four African-American boys in the back of a convertible in Belle Isle, Detroit, one of them standing up with his shirt off, clutching the front seat, the better to revel in the ride. And that is why the first person to get the measure of “The Americans,” and still the best reader of its runes, was Jack Kerouac. Frank had not yet read “On the Road” when, a few days after its publication, he met Kerouac at a party and asked him to write an introduction to his photographs. Joyce Johnson, the novelist's girlfriend at the time, remembered Frank carrying boxes of pictures:

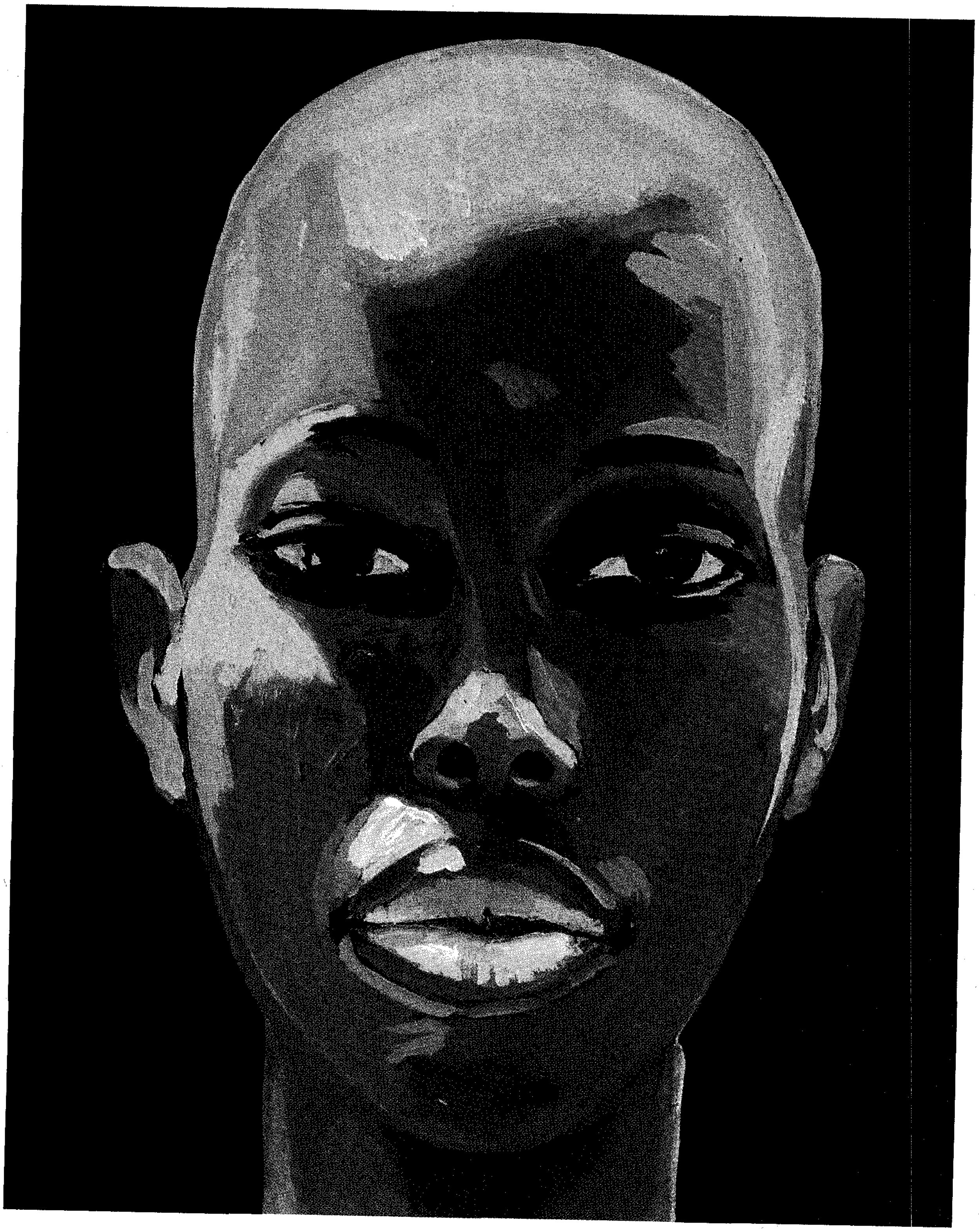
> The first one I saw was of a road somewhere out west—blacktop gleaming under headlights with a white stripe down the middle that went on and on toward an outlying darkness. Jack's road! I thought immediately.

And so it was. “Long shot of night road arrowing forlorn into immensities and flat of impossible-to-believe America in New Mexico under the prisoner's moon,” Kerouac wrote. He had followed much the same course as Frank, back and forth across the country, in his own peregrinations of 1947-49. He had even been up to Butte, where “a short walk around the sloping streets (in below-zero weather at night) showed that everybody in Butte was drunk.” And now, at once, he caught a kindred spirit, one who had “sucked a sad poem right out of America onto film.” It took another roamer to fix the abiding strengths of Frank's achievement: its mystery, its sheer fatigue (notice how many pictures tilt and lurch, as if in the beery wake of a hard day's drive), and, above all, the ineffable reach of its sadness. Finger on the shutter release, Frank could find himself transported into what he later called “a state of grace”—a long way from rage, for sure, and not too far from a grudging kind of love. Frank never quite surrendered his status as an outsider; no artist does. But at last, and whatever the misgivings of the Arkansas police, he merged his identity with the new world that he had painstakingly explored, and which was, in the long run—as this book and exhibition charitably concede—honored by his illuminations. In 1963, the Swiss Mister was awarded U.S. citizenship, joined in union with those he had photographed. His own comment, on that occasion, remains as beautifully inscrutable as his work: “*Ich bin ein Amerikaner.*” ♦

FICTION

THE LOWER RIVER

BY PAUL THEROUX



Even in his best days in Medford, running the family clothing store, Altman had always imagined that he would return to Africa, to the Lower River. It had been his Eden, for those four years he had spent in a village called Malabo as a young man. Now, after nearly forty years, he was on his way back. The decades in between seemed almost a digression: the business, the marriage, the children. Altman's Store for Men had closed, the marriage had failed, Altman's children were grown, absent, living their lives. A little over sixty, he was alone again. He had enough money to see him into his old age, yet he wanted more than that. No one needed him in Medford, and he wondered if the people of Malabo might still remember what he had done there.

The Lower River was the southernmost region of the southern province of Malawi, the poorest part of a poor country, home of the Sena people. The Sena were small, slender, delicate, violent only when they were bingeing. A neglected tribe, they were despised by those who didn't know them, were associated with squalor, cruelty, and incompetence. With superstition, too. They lived in a web of beliefs, the Lower River thick with spirits—*mfiti*—most of them vindictive spectres of the dead, restless in their malevolence. Nothing happened without a reason. A tree fell for a reason, a thatched roof caught fire for a reason—because someone wished it alight. Disease, disfigurement, a bad harvest, a broken bone, a stillborn infant: all were caused by human agency—the witch in the next hut or the next village, or the *mfiti* representing an avenging soul.

Altman had studied the all-night Nyau dance, which was performed naked, with a fetish mask and drumming. Fluent in the Sena language, he had been one of those volunteer teachers whom the other Americans muttered about with respect tinged with satire, because they never saw him, and no one, not even other Africans, wanted to go to the Lower River. In his first year, village life had seemed a struggle to Altman. The shop at the *boma* sold Sunlight Soap, Koo ketchup, cooking oil, bottles of Lion Lager, single cigarettes, loose tobacco and tea. But few people had more than a handful of tickeys, the thin gray threepence coins that bought two cigarettes. The market stalls sold vegetables and rice, smoked fish and cassava. Not much of anything, but in the time he lived there Altman had decided that you didn't need any more than that.

TITOUAN LAMAZOU

After a year, he had understood the inflections of the weather. It was not the stifling, squalid place of its reputation; it was dense and subtle. The heat enlivened him. The smells were of woodsmoke and stagnation and the perfume of the water hyacinths in the river, sweetish with decay, the sun-heated dust like talcum.

Teaching at the primary school that he'd helped to build, Altman had become popular in the district, and when a member of Parliament paid a visit to Nsanje he asked to meet Altman. Altman served as a counsellor, he wrote letters for the villagers, he sent messages, he read letters for those villagers who couldn't read, whispering the words for the sake of privacy. All the languages in the region were written phonetically, so he could convey the meaning even when he had no idea what was written on the torn-out copybook page.

For the Sena people, Altman had been the *mzungu*, the white man. His term was two years. He had stayed four—a record for Malabo. In this district of small huts and barefoot people and unpaved roads—a world made out of mud—he had been content. The Lower River had become the measure of his happiness. Malabo had remained in his mind in the way that the notion of home might persist in someone else's. When all hope is lost and everything is up the wall, he often thought, reassuring himself, I can always go back.

Malawi, these days, was advertised as a vacation destination, with hotels at the lake in the north and even some game parks. Like many other resort areas in Africa, it was a country where local people starved and the few tourists ate well and were fussed over.

Even before his plane touched down, Altman knew that he had made the right decision. He relaxed, smiling as he looked out the window at the low empty hills, the creases of green in the landscape which marked the foliage along rivers and creeks, the villages made visible by the smoke rising from cooking fires. From the air, the place looked just as he had left it, as a man of twenty-three. Where else could you go on earth and say that?

When the immigration officer asked him his reason for being in the country, Altman spoke the sentence he had rehearsed: "*Ndi kupita ku* Lower River."

The man said, "What am I hearing?" and reached across his desk to shake Altman's hand. "And myself I have never been there, Father."

Altman took a domestic flight that was leaving later in the day for Blantyre, and stayed the night at the Mount Soche Hotel. He marvelled at the crowded dirty city. Assuming that he would be in Malabo for a week or so, he used his credit card at Barclays Bank to make a cash withdrawal. The clerk, a young man in a shirt and tie, counted the notes twice, squared the pile, and snapped a rubber band around it.

"Be careful, sir," the clerk said, squeezing the fat envelope under the glass window.

Almost as a rebuke, Altman said, "I used to live here. I was here at Independence. The Lower River."

The hotel driver, summoned from the parking lot to the travel desk in the lobby, laughed when Altman said that he wanted to visit Nsanje. Altman had mentioned the district, because the man would never have heard of Malabo. The sunglasses over the driver's smooth jut-jawed face gave him a cricket's profile. He smiled greedily at Altman's watch. Altman knew that his lingering gaze of admiration was like a plea.

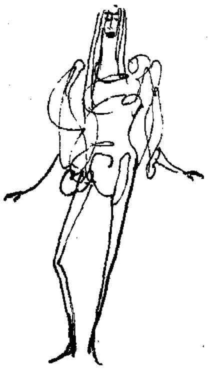
"Let's leave at seven."

"Eight will be best. African time. No worry, be happy."

"Seven," Altman said, without a smile, and the man turned deferential—respectful, with a slight jerkiness of fear in his face. "And no smoking in the car."

The farther they got from town the flimsier and more temporary the buildings became, from the solid terraces of shops fronting onto storm drains to tile-roofed bungalows, tin-roofed shacks, and plastered huts thatched with straw, the skeletal sticks of the frames showing through the crumbled mud. And then the road grew worse, just a strip of broken paving in a gully between two slopes in some places. On the hillsides were stumps of trees that had been cut down, forests stripped by people foraging for fuel: the Africa of settlement and people, not of animals.

But beyond Chiromo, in the southern province, nearing the Lower River, where the villages were fewer, he smiled at the disorder, the tall grass, the odor of dust and smoke. It was as it had been—too flat and featureless to photograph, but powerful, his first experience of a world that was ancient in its simplicities.



“You like,” the driver said, seeing Altman’s face in the rearview mirror.

Then they were throwing up whitish dust, following the course of the river’s west bank, heading straight into the sun. By early afternoon, they were passing a row of small shops in Nsanje.

“Keep going,” Altman said.

“You said Nsanje. This is the *boma*.”

“The village I want is farther on.”

“That is extra charge.”

“Stop the car,” Altman said. The driver was so rattled that he kept going. “Stop the car—I’ll walk.”

“It is too far, bwana,” the driver said, with that same twitching fear in his face.

“I know where we are,” Altman said. “Don’t charge me extra.”

And down the road two miles, at Magwero, Altman signalled for him to stop, and the driver said, “*Iwe*,” in the familiar form—“You!” Then he saw the men sitting under the tree, heard them call out, and said, “They are waiting for you.”

“Yes,” Altman said, but he knew better. This was the usual place in Magwero for men to sit, on logs under a mango tree. Seeing a *mzungu*, they had shouted a greeting.

Out of the car, lighting a cigarette, the driver seemed uneasy, eager to leave. “What time you coming back, bwana?”

The air was so still his smoke clung to his face.

“You can go,” Altman said.

A great soft cloud of white dust raised by the departing car closed over it as it rocked in the wheel ruts of the narrow road. Altman found the departure a strange breach of etiquette. The man should have lingered a little, accepted some bananas or a cup of tea, handed out a cigarette or two.

“Welcome, Father,” one of the men said, rising from the log.

This man gave his name as Maso, and introduced the man next to him as Magongo. Altman said that he had known their families long ago.

They knew of the *mzungu* at Malabo, they said. They had heard stories about him.

Altman said, “Maybe it was someone else.”

“There was only one *mzungu* at Malabo!” Magongo said. He called to a boy sitting against a bicycle, holding Altman’s duffelbag, and told him to hurry to Malabo. “Tell Manyenga the American is here.”

Then Maso led him through the low spreading trees and across the hard-packed dirt of a courtyard that was being swept by a small girl. They sat before a hut and drank milky tea, and as they talked of the rains, the height of the river, their children, Altman looked around and marvelled at the compact village and the sheltering trees, the way the sunlight speckled the ground.

He was dozing when a motorcycle roared into the clearing.

“Manyenga,” one of the men said.

The man parked his bike and approached Altman, saying, “The boy on the *njinga* said, ‘The American is here,’ and I said, ‘I am knowing him. My grandfather was his friend.’ Welcome, welcome.”

And there raced through Altman a lightness, a slackening in his flesh, of relief, of gratitude. He felt important; they knew him. He wished that someone he knew back in the States could have witnessed this, the tableau of his sitting among the elders in a remote village on the Lower River.

Now the welcome was extended to Manyenga: more tea, some smoke-dried fish, and praise for Altman, the long-ago *mzungu* of their elders’ stories.

“I was a small boy when I first saw you,” one of the men said. He was old, toothless, in a tattered shirt, with reddened eyes, his skin shiny and loose like a reptile’s.

“I never saw this man before,” Manyenga said. “My grandfather, he was the friend.”

They talked in this congenial way, in English, until finally Manyenga got up and began to thank the men elaborately, taking their hands in his. Altman knew that it was time to go.

“What do you have in the pipeline?” Manyenga asked.

Altman smiled at the expression. “Nothing special. Just to see Malabo.”

“I can arrange, Father.”

The duffelbag was tied to the rear carrier of the motorbike, and he swung his leg over and sat behind Manyenga. They travelled under the shade trees the short distance to the main road and then, a few miles south, raising dust, took the turnoff, the back road to Lutwe, which ran parallel to the Mozambique border, a mere footpath in Altman’s time. After about eight miles—Altman knew that it was more than a two-hour walk back to the main road—Manyenga slowed the bike and plunged into the bush, not a road, hardly a track, just an opening in the high grass that led to a clearing, a scattering of huts, the big upright baskets on legs which were granaries, the crisscrossed paths that marked the edge of Malabo.

Where the trees were greenest, on the banks of the Nyamihutu, a woman was beating a blue blanket suspended on a line. Near her, a girl swept the smooth earth with a straw broom.

Manyenga pulled up at a hut. He said, “This is your home, Father.”

“I can stay only a few days,” Altman said.

“You are welcome, Father.”

The woman and the girl greeted them by falling to their knees and calling out, and children and older boys from the other huts came running. The villagers gathered, hanging back. He saw that they were afraid of him—some of the older ones were terrified. Their anxious faces made him self-conscious. He wanted to reassure them. He would have handed out money, except that he knew it would create a mob scene. He smiled and, in a chiefly gesture, saluted them.

“My other wife,” Manyenga said of a woman wincing at Altman’s raised hand. “She was married to my brother.”

“And who’s this?” Altman asked.

The girl, too shy to speak, twisted her cloth wrapper in her fingers.

"Zizi," Manyenga said, and hearing her name the girl covered her face. "My brother's child. He died some two years ago."

Seeing that the girl had gone shy, one of the small boys ambled near her, limping and chattering. The boy had twisted fingers and sores on his legs and a battered face, flaky patches of scurf where hair was missing from his head. He could have been the victim of a fight, but Altman guessed that he was epileptic, with head wounds from continually falling to the ground—and now Altman saw that he was not a boy at all but a disfigured dwarf, boy-sized, in rags, who could have been any age.

"*Moni, moni*," Altman said, greeting the dwarf, trying to distract him from teasing the girl. And rummaging in his duffel he found some candy that he'd bought at the hotel in Blantyre. "*Mankhwala*," he said—medicine.

The dwarf laughed and ate it, licking his fingers, then walked away unsteadily, giggling because the others were laughing at him and calling out an English word.

"What are they saying?"

"His name, Snowdon."

Though the girl did not look up again, Altman could see that she was relieved the dwarf had forgotten her.

"You can stay here, Father," Manyenga said. "The roof is bad"—it was thatch, the bundles loosened—"because we had so many challenges. But it's clean enough. Rest your body. My wife will bring water for your bath. Tonight we will kill a chicken. We can discuss your program."

"My program?"

"Your agenda, Father."

It was Zizi who brought the water in a basin, with a small chip of soap, and after Altman had washed he lay on the string bed and let down the mosquito net that hung like a bridal veil, and listened to the boys' raised voices in the clearing. Where else in the world could you arrive unannounced and be welcomed on sight?

That evening, Altman distributed the presents he'd brought—the watch he gave to Manyenga, a shawl he gave to the senior wife, a pocketknife to the junior wife, some books for the children.

Then the women served the food—the chicken that had been grilling on the fire, and roasted corncobs, a bowl of *nsima* and stewed greens, a plate of dried fish. "*Kachasu*," Manyenga said, uncorking a bottle. He poured Altman a glass of banana gin, and they toasted each other.

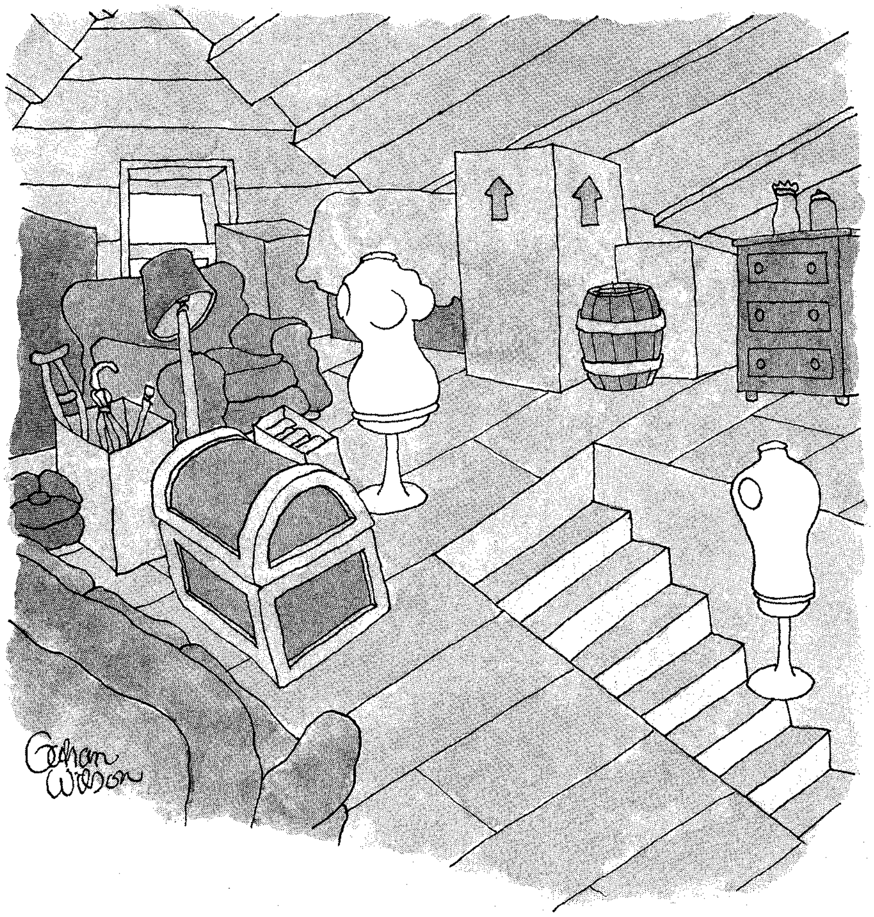
The children sat a little distance away; some women were standing, holding babies in cloth slings.

While Manyenga was talking, in English and Sena, Altman slipped to the ground, resting his head against his chair. He must have dozed off, because in a sudden dream he heard a word that he recognized: *atopa*—tired.

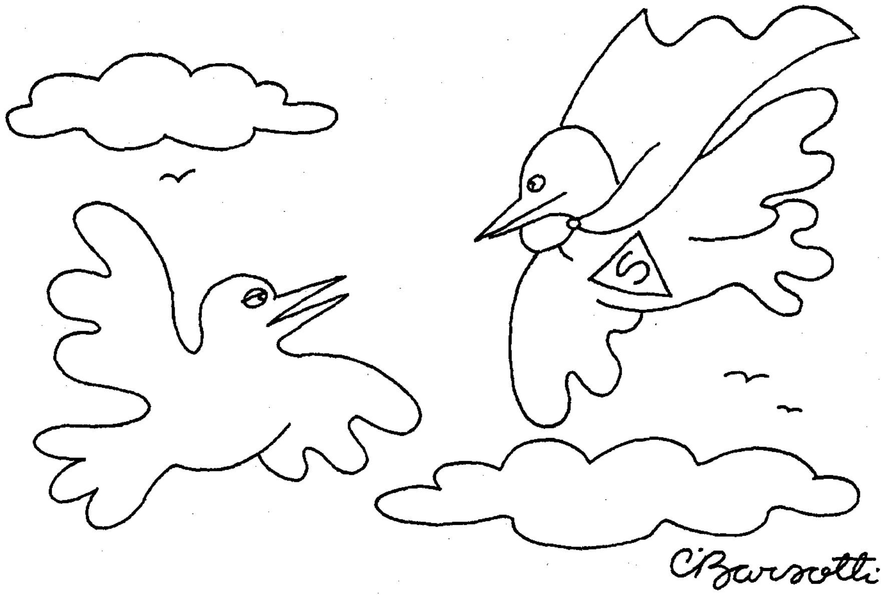
He was helped to his feet. Accompanied by someone steering him with lantern light, saying nothing, he tottered to his hut and crawled under the mosquito net into his string bed, his flesh inert, like clay.

He woke before sunrise, as a cock's crow tore at the silence and the darkness. He could not remember ever having slept so soundly: blind and deaf, a whole night with his mouth open, drawing shallow breaths. He listened to his compact shortwave radio until it was light, and then he walked the length of the village through the scrub. In the courtyards of most of the huts, crouching women fanned the glowing embers of cooking fires. Altman looked into the woven barrels of the granaries and was glad to see that they were full of drying corncobs. He saw the schoolhouse in the distance; he would save it for the afternoon. He continued walking to the road, and past it, to the stream. He saw someone bathing and quickly withdrew—it was Zizi, a dark dripping stick figure. Then he returned to his hut. He shaved with his battery-powered razor and wrote some notes in his journal. He unpacked his duffelbag, sorted his clothes, and hung up the empty bag to keep it away from rats—he saw that there were droppings on the floor from rats nesting in the thatched roof. Then he sat and finished the paperback he'd brought to read.

All this and it was not yet seven-thirty. He smiled, thinking of the day that stretched ahead—the long, over-bright day of village somnolence, supine



"So where have you been?"



"In case you hadn't noticed, we can *all* *fly."*

in its stillness, under trails of woodsmoke and the chirping of birds.

Announcing himself, calling out, "*Kodi, kodi!*" Manyenga visited after eight and invited Altman to breakfast. Now Altman saw how young he was, still in his twenties, jaunty in a baseball cap and a blue shirt.

"You were going about early," Manyenga said.

Someone had noticed him; now, an hour later, everyone knew.

They were standing before the hut, Manyenga frowning at the roof.

"But the roof must be replaced. I want to get an iron roof for you, but—eh! eh!"

Altman knew that the grunt meant money.

"What about fixing the thatch? There's plenty of grass."

"The people who are making the thatch are all dead. Even the women. Even myself I am not knowing. We are needing an intervention."

Altman smiled at the clumsiness of the request on his first morning. Usually "we are needing" came later. But Altman was not dismayed; he was more at ease knowing that Manyenga was unsubtle.

He said, "We can talk about it."

"I'm going to the *boma* this morning. Maybe they are having some iron sheets." He mumbled, seeming to search for more words. "It's a big priority."

Manyenga, he knew, had already mentally bought the iron sheets for the roof, kept the change, and perhaps put aside the scraps to sell or trade. It remained only for the transaction to take place, for Altman to hand over the money.

"I have provided this table on the *khonde*, for your projects"—it was at the corner of the veranda. Altman hadn't noticed it. "You can take your breakfast here. I will find you later, Father."

The girl Zizi brought the basin again, and watched him as he washed his face and brushed his teeth. Then she returned with a plate of steamed *nsima*, a puddle of oil in the center, and a bowl of vegetables in gravy and some tea. She stood in the shade. He spoke to her but she averted her eyes, perhaps ashamed at his having seen her bathing in the stream.

As he was eating, Altman saw a creeping shadow come to rest: the bruised dwarf, Snowdon, hunkered down by the veranda, rocking on his stumpy feet. He was sad, his ugly face lopsided as though in pain, helplessly small, his wounds bright with infection.

Altman gave him some *nsima*. He crammed the whole lump into his mouth, crumbs on his fingers and cheeks, and chewed it with his mouth open.

"Snowdon," Altman said.

Hearing his name, the dwarf opened his mouth wide in satisfaction, showing Altman the half-chewed food on his purplish, pitted tongue.

Later in the morning, Altman walked to the maize patch. He picked up a hoe and began chopping the dry earth with it, scraping the weeds away. Two older boys saw him and laughed. He knew why: hoeing was women's work.

Altman, hacking near some dry shucks, startled a snake. Deftly, he pinned its head down with the hoe blade, pressing it, then picked it up, and, as he pinched it just behind its head, it wrapped his arm with the whole coil of its whipping body.

"*Kalikukuti*," he said. A twig snake, a juvenile, hardly two feet long.

The two boys stepped back, murmuring, "*Njoka*." Altman stepped out of the maize patch—the boys ran, stamping in the dust. The villagers feared snakes, he knew; encountering a snake at the start of a journey, a Sena traveller returned home. Because of these fears, in his years here Altman had developed an interest, to set himself apart, so that he would be known as something more than a *mzungu*. He had kept some snakes in baskets, and fed them with lizards and grasshoppers and mice, and he had released them in places where they'd be safe and breed.

In the afternoon, he walked again to the stream, retracing his steps of the morning—perhaps this was the beginning of a routine? All the while, he was followed by small skinny children—a village of children, it seemed, like a settlement in a folktale. One said, "*Mankhwala*"—medicine—and the rest chimed in. They were asking for candy.

"Tomorrow," Altman said. He repeated it in Sena: "*Mawa*." Seeing them laughing, he asked if they knew English.

They shyly admitted no.

"Do you go to school?"

"No school!"

He had intended to visit the school that afternoon, but now the light was fading. Night came quickly; he'd see it tomorrow. As he was watching the last long orangey tatters of the sunset, Manyenga called out "Father!" for the evening meal.

Manyenga sat with him and, in a tone meant to reassure him, said, "I have ordered the roof for your hut."

"How much?"

"Very cheap. I am knowing this man. His father remembers you too much. Maybe he was your student. He gave me a good price. He knows we are partnering."

Altman said in Sena, "Lots of money?"

"No, Father. Not at all. One sheet for four thousand *kwacha* only." That was forty dollars.

"How many sheets do you need?"

Manyenga didn't answer. Altman knew the man was making a complex calculation, thinking of numbers and discarding them. At last he said, "Six," in the local way, *sick-ees*.

"Say five."

The next day was the same: the walk, the dwarf at breakfast, the riverbank, a nap, another walk, writing notes, then dinner at Manyenga's, more talk of money, and bed. He remembered his first weeks here long ago—the full days of work, the hot nights by lantern light grading students' exercise books—and he grew sad, admiring his younger hopeful self.

"I want to see the school," he said to Manyenga on the third day, seeing him straddling his motorcycle.

"It is finished, Father."

"Maybe I could get it fixed up."

Manyenga considered this, chewing his lips, his face twisting in thought. He propped his bike on the kickstand and walked with Altman beyond the clearing, through the tall grass, to the school. Head-high bushes had grown up around the buildings. The roof of the classroom block was broken—only brittle pieces remaining. Weeds grew in the eaves. The windows, too, were broken. The office was empty, though it showed signs of having been lived in—mats and quilts twisted on the floor, scorch marks on the walls.

"How long has it been like this?"

"I am not knowing," Manyenga said, truly bewildered.

"Didn't you go to school here?"

"I was schooling at Chimombo, near the *boma*. I completed my school certificate in Blantyre."

"But you've done well. And you're still young."

"Yes, Father."

Altman was thinking of the huts, the bike, the two wives.

"I was a driver for some years," Manyenga said. He mentioned the name of a prominent charity.

Now Altman understood those words he kept using—"agenda," "pipeline," "program." "Why didn't you keep working for them?"

"They were cheeky. They were falsely accusing me. They couldn't cope at all with our customs. Not like you, Father."

Altman said, "Will you help fix the school?"

"I can send some chaps."

This wasn't the answer that Altman was hoping for, but he said, "O.K.," and, looking again at the ruin, he quoted a Sena proverb: "Slowly, slowly makes a bundle."

He was slashing at the weeds with a hacker the next day when four boys arrived, creeping through the tall grass, parting the blades with their outstretched hands. They were no more than fifteen or so, very thin, wearing rags for shirts and tattered trousers.

"The *nduna* sent us."

So Manyenga was a chief.

"This was a school, long ago," Altman said.

"It is nothing now," one of the boys said.

"But we can fix it. Then Malabo will have a school."

They were watching shyly, silently, but breathing shallowly in a way that showed that they were paying attention.

"Who are your parents? Maybe I knew them."

They didn't reply. They seemed to grow shyer.

"No father, no mother," one said.

"They were sick," another, the tallest boy, said, drawing out the Sena word. He chopped with the flat of his hand. "They died."

"What about relatives?"

"We live down there"—and the boy squinted into the sun.

"How many altogether?"

The boy flashed ten fingers at Altman. "Small and big."

Altman was still holding the hacker, standing among the tall weeds and the overhanging bushes he had slashed.

"Help me," he said.

"We can try," the tall boy said. He took the knife from Altman. Another boy grasped a spare panga from a stump. And they whacked at the weeds, while Altman went through the classrooms to examine the wreckage. He heard the boys muttering and was gladdened by the sound. He smelled snakes, the hot eggy stink of a decayed nest in a corner of the room.

He stripped a narrow tree limb of its twigs, and then poked with it, startling the snake he knew was there, a black-lipped mamba. He prodded it, let it whip and coil, then quickly snatched it, keeping its frothy mouth just above his fist. Then he brought it outside to show the boys, a trophy they'd remember.

"Mamba," he said. "*Mbadza*."

But the boys were gone, and, not only that, they'd taken the two knives.

"They are useless," Manyenga said later. "I will get the pangas for you." He thought a moment. "Did you give them money?"

Altman said no.

Manyenga relaxed, and smiled. "Ah," he said, as though to convey, "What did you expect?"

Without the boys, Altman went back to the school and slashed at the weeds and tried to tidy the classrooms. Zizi helped with her straw broom; Snowdon watched, flicking at the flies that settled on his sores. Altman knew that Zizi was being offered to him, that all he needed to say was "Go in my hut," and she would obey. She was tall for a Sena girl, with a shaved head and skinny fingers, bony wrists, small breasts, long legs with wide feet. Those feet and the way she sometimes stood reminded him of a waterbird—a heron, perhaps. With stylish clothes she could have passed for the sort of model he'd seen in magazines; she had the starved angularity of high fashion.

Altman kept working at the margins of the school, conspicuously, to attract attention, and perhaps shame others into helping. But no one came, except sometimes a woman looking for firewood, taking the kindling he made.

And then one night he was roused by drumming. The flames of the ceremonial bonfire flickered on his walls. They were doing the Nyau dance—he recognized the syncopation. An image was always carried by the witch doctor, or worn as a mask. He crept out of his hut, keeping himself hidden. The moon was bright enough to see by—perhaps the full moon was the reason for the dance. The dancers and drummers surrounded the witch doctor, whose mask was grotesque and—the long nose, the animal hair, the white skin—quite obviously represented Altman's face.

Hardly seven, and the morning sun slanting through the twiggy trees had filled the clearing at Malabo with unbreathable humidity, like an invisible smothering presence. Squinting into the distance, Altman saw a shimmering spectral blob in the heat, coming closer, resolving itself into two figures, large and small, Manyenga and a burdened girl hurrying behind him.

"*Nduna*," Altman said.

Manyenga smiled, seeing Altman sitting as usual at his table on the narrow veranda, Zizi squatting on her heels near him, the dwarf crouching a little distance away by a low bush. His stare made Altman self-conscious. The anxiety, the calculation, the reticence approaching fear that he'd noticed in the young man on his arrival were gone. Now Manyenga gazed directly at him, almost in defiance. He said, "But, eh, you are being a chief as well, Father."

Altman saw himself through Manyenga's eyes: an old *mzungu*, attended by a skinny girl and a dwarf, a portrait of inaction, like a ruined chief on a rickety throne. He'd stopped shaving, his clothes were stained. He had to get away, he realized, if only to Blantyre, to collect his thoughts and decide on his next move. Nothing had gone quite the way he'd imagined it. He had been cheated out of the money for the roofing; he was being overcharged for room and board; no one was interested in the school.

"You were watching us at the Nyau dance," Manyenga said, gesturing to the girl to set down the bowl of porridge and the mug of milky tea she was carrying. It was a breach of etiquette, bordering on taboo, for an outsider to observe the Nyau dance. But Manyenga was nodding, with a slyly satisfied face—a smile that was not a smile. "We were celebrating you," he said. "We were thanking you, Father."

Altman said, in Sena, "A ghost doesn't miss a funeral"—a proverb he'd learned long ago, one he'd often quoted in Medford.

"You are knowing so much, Father."

Altman knew better: they were trying to diminish his power. He said, "I have to go to Blantyre today." He took another breath, because his chest was tight from the heat, the scrutiny of the younger man. "I'll need a lift to the *boma*."

"As you are wishing, Father," Manyenga said.

"I need to withdraw some money from the bank. I'm almost out of cash."

Instead of looking greedy and grateful, Manyenga frowned, but he lifted his hands in an accommodating gesture, as if to say, "Anything for you."

They left on the motorcycle later in the morning. Altman, sitting behind Manyenga, had his passport and all his important papers with him. Not fifty yards into the journey, even before they had reached the road, Manyenga swerved and screamed, "*Njoka!*"

Altman twisted around, looking for the snake, lost his balance, and fell, bruising his side. Winded, he lay in the dust, wondering if he had broken any ribs.

"We cannot go," Manyenga said, righting the bike, helping Altman from the ground.

His brow was heavy, his face dark with fear—Altman knew of the prohibition against travelling after a snake has crossed your path. Manyenga's mood had changed from agreeable to anxious.

"I didn't see the snake."

"It was so big, Father! A green mamba," Manyenga said. "We must obey."

Altman was too bruised to argue. He limped back to his hut, and there he sat, wondering how to overcome this man. He suspected that this was a ruse. Realizing that he'd been forced to lie to Manyenga made him uneasy; the lie told him that he was afraid to tell the truth.

He felt in his duffelbag for his pouch of money. He found the envelope and saw that some of it was missing—and he laughed, mocking his own stupidity. That was why Manyenga had reacted the way he had. He knew that Altman had money, that he was lying.

That night the Nyau was danced again. Altman's head throbbed. The thump of the drums echoed in his skull. He had a fever—he knew malaria, the flu-like symptoms, the headache. He found his bottle of chloroquine and, unable to locate his water jug, chewed three tablets and lay in his string bed, the drums beating against his eyes and ears, his sore body, his sore head.

Then days and nights were one: he did not know how long he lay there, shivering with chills, gasping in the heat, his heart fluttering. He heard a wild commotion, screeching, drumming, the ululating of frenzied women. His skin was sensitive to the sheet. Even the slightest brush of the mosquito net caused him discomfort. He suffered most when the sunlight shot through the windows of the hut and caught him on the face, and in the night his teeth chattered; even though he was wrapped in a blanket, he could not get warm.

When, before dawn one day, the fever eased, he saw everything more clearly; the sickness had stripped him of sentiment. He understood the foolishness of his visit. He had come expecting to be welcomed; he had wanted to contribute something to the village again. But no one was interested. The people of Malabo were much worse off now than when he had come before, and more cynical, shrewder, as a result.

In his sickbed, he felt a sense of resolve. He'd made a mistake. As soon as he was feeling better, he'd go home. He saw the danger of being sick in this remote village. His dreams were fractured and irrational; ugly beaked birds figured in them, crowds of noisy people, great heat.

Zizi brought him the tea and bananas he asked for, but it was an effort for him to swallow. It consoled him to see her and the dwarf right outside, their heads silhouetted at the window.

At last he was able to stand, to eat a little porridge.

"I'm going," he said, and was not sure whether he was speaking in Sena or English. "Get the chief."

Manyenga was soon striding across the brightness of the clearing, mopping his head, seeming relieved that Altman had recovered. Altman stood in the shade of the veranda, swaying slightly.

"I need to drink," Altman said. "Bring me a kettle of hot water for tea."

Manyenga, suddenly fierce-faced,

ordered Zizi to fetch the kettle. And when she was gone he said, "She likes you too much, Father."

"She's your daughter?" Altman said.

"My brother's child. He died of the *eddsi*. You know our custom. I had to take my brother's widow as my wife, also his children."

"She's what—fifteen, sixteen?"

"Sixteen-something. When you were sick with the fever, she was so sorry."

"She should be in school."

"The school fees," Manyenga said. "That is the badness."

Then Altman remembered. In a croaky voice, he said, "I heard noise when I was sick. What was the noise?"

"*Kufafaniza imfa*. A man died. His goods were taken. His house destroyed."

"You erased his death."

"You are so clever, Father. You are knowing so much about our customs, eh-eh."

Altman said, "I have to go home."

"This is your home, Father."

Altman shivered, as he had during the worst of his sickness.

Manyenga said, "I have a very big question to ask you."

"Go ahead," Altman said. "Ask me."

"Not now. At the proper time. We will have a feast tomorrow. Then"—and he smiled and spread his arms, meaning, it seemed, that all would be clear.

Remembering that his stash of money had been raided, Altman went to the school the next day and poked around for another snake. He found a small puff adder and brought it back to his hut. He eased it into a basket, and put his envelope of money into the basket with it, making sure that Zizi and the dwarf saw what he was doing. The snake was not especially venomous, but to the villagers it was deadly.

"Welcome, Father," Manyenga said at the feast that night, showing him to a chair. The other men and boys were seated on the ground, a few on woven mats. A piece of meat turned on a spit, and Manyenga's elder wife was stirring a large tin pot.

Altman picked at the shreds of meat on his plate and listened to Manyenga praise him.

"Now, Father"—and Manyenga called one of the boys over. "This young chap is going to South Africa for work."

"*Tsalani bwino*," Altman said, as a formal farewell.

"But he is needing *ndalama*," Manyenga said.

The boy stood straight, bug-eyed with fear in the firelight, a scarecrow in his too-big shirt and torn trousers, his bony wrists pressed against his sides.

Altman nodded, hoping to appear noncommittal, but he knew that they were masterly at discerning the nuances of gesture; even blinks or a way of breathing revealed a state of mind. It was not sorcery; they were illiterate, and so they were hyper-alert in every other sense.

And, because they saw that he had been moved by the sight of the boy standing there, they refilled his glass with *kachasu* and toasted him. Later, the women sang, clapping their hands, and danced before him, standing in a line. He understood the words—"Our father, our chief, our *mzungu* in Malabo." Their skin shone with perspiration, and dust clung to it, creating a weird plastery cosmetic. Their growly harmonizing resonated in the pit of his stomach, and he could distinguish Zizi's voice from the others; it stirred something in him—a purring within him that answered her.

On any other night he would have excused himself and crept across the clearing to his hut, but now he was the guest of honor. He called to the boy, motioning him to his side. He gave the boy some money, folded under his fingers.

Everyone saw. Manyenga said, "You are our chief, dear Father."

Now the only thought in his mind was the urgency of leaving. He tore a page from his notebook and wrote a message to the consulate in Blantyre, stating that he was unwell and needed to talk to the consul. He found an envelope. Stepping off the veranda of his hut with the letter in his hand, he heard a whistle.

The clean white envelope, brilliant in the sunlight, had been spotted from forty yards away.

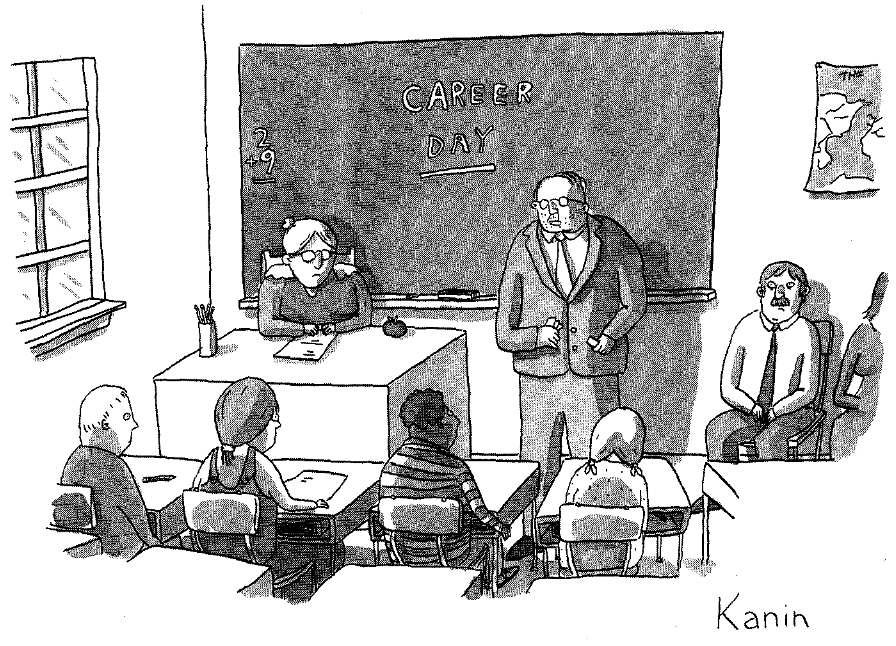
"*Kalata*," Manyenga said, materializing on the path, asserting himself with the force of his voice. "We will post the *kalata* for you."

"I can do it."

"The chief does not post letters. His people carry out the workload. They brush the glue on the stamps. Give it, my friend!"

Feeling feeble, Altman handed it over. He knew that it would never be sent.

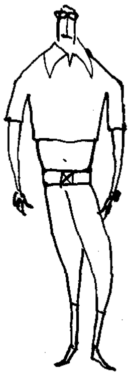
He had abandoned any idea of improving the village. The school would



"I'm between jobs right now, so if you kids would give these business cards to your parents that would be primo helpful."

remain a shell, a nest of snakes. The villagers would subsist; the weaker ones would die. He sat like them, breathing the shade.

One day he said at breakfast, "I'm going to pick some bananas"—using that as an excuse to take a stroll, to feel less trapped. Though he had not spoken to anyone in particular, his words reached Manyenga, who confronted him.



"The chief cannot pick bananas! You must not do so, Father. Your people will fetch them."

So they waited on him, the whole village having been enlisted to help. They were no longer afraid of him. He would rise from his chair on the veranda and as soon as he stepped into the clearing he'd hear a sharp whistle that signalled "He's moving."

He was mocked by the memory of the gratitude he'd felt on the first day. And he saw that he was changed, almost a different man. A residue of malarial blood remained in his veins. Still unsteady on his feet, he sometimes felt just like those toothless elders gabbing under the tree at Magwero. Heat and illness had turned him into someone he hardly knew, and one afternoon, in a voice he hardly recognized, he called out for a drink.

Someone knocked, then he heard Zizi's voice, her soft singsong inquiry, "*Kodi*?"

She entered, padded to the side table. The mirror shook as she set the basin of water down. Lying on his side, too tired to move, he studied her reflection in the mirror. He spoke to the mirror: "I want to see you."

Bewilderment showed on her girlish face for a moment, then gave way to a half smile, as though she were quietly pleased that he was asking something of her.

"Yes, Father."

She drew in her lips and bit down on them, vexed, her face compressed in thought. Altman made a spiralling gesture with his finger that meant "unwrap."

Zizi hesitated, and then, as though remembering, became calmer, turned away, and unknotted her cloth. She draped it over the chair back and faced him again, her hands clasped below her waist for the sake of modesty.

Still watching her in the mirror, Altman said, "Dance."

She didn't move, though she blinked at the word *kutamba*, a woman's wild dance, done naked.

"Dance," he said, pleading.

Untwining her fingers, lifting her hands, bending slightly, she parted her legs, then raised her knees, rolling her head—all the time looking aside, meeting his gaze only in the mirror. She had large feet, but she planted them lightly. She had scaly sticklike arms, scaly sticklike legs, tiny breasts, and her eyes gleamed with anxiety.

"Snake," he said. "You're my snake."

Someone must have seen. Soon afterward, the whole village seemed to know what had happened in the hut. But the incident, evidence of his weakness—resentment, boredom, a pang of desperation—had the effect of convincing the village that he meant to stay, that he'd discovered a way of being happy, that at last they'd satisfied him. He found this out when a man with blotches on the whites of his eyes, a relative of Manyenga's (he said brother, but "brother" was a general term), came to him and said he wanted to buy a motorcycle.

"And what will you do for me?" Altman said.

"Zizi will dance for you, sure." The man stared at him, a smile in his spotted eyes.

Altman handed him some money, saying, "I want a ride on your bike to the *boma*."

"I will give you, Father."

Later that day, Altman set off across the compound with Zizi and the dwarf. He heard the insistent warning whistle, drowning out all other sounds, even the shrillness of the birds. Altman was leading the others in an almost stately way, holding the basket to his chest.

At the creek bank, he stooped and released the snake onto the hot sand. Before the snake could slip away Altman pinned it with a forked stick and let it thrash, whipping a pattern in the sand with its thickened body. And then the villagers saw him loosely swinging the empty basket across the clearing to his hut.

After that, they didn't whistle in the same way when he left his hut. Instead of the shrill note of urgency, it was softer, like birdsong, just a signalling tweet. And whenever he returned, almost without fail, some money was missing from the basket where he'd kept the snake.

That week—the week of the separate raids on his stash of money—he fell ill again. This time it came quickly. It hit him as he was walking through the village, first a dizziness and an aching throat and pain behind his eyes, a buzz in his muscles, and an urgent thirst.

Dehydration, he thought. He sat down on the bare ground and pressed his eyes. He called for water, though he knew that he might be past the point of being able to absorb any liquid.

"Salt," he murmured to Zizi, and remembered the word *mchere*. But she seemed too bewildered to move.

Women carrying babies in cloth slings on their way home from hoeing weeds in the maize fields stopped and watched him, more out of curiosity than pity, as he clutched his head. They surrounded him, as they would a dog in distress, or any creature dying, and therefore a diversion and not a threat.

The dwarf was near him; Altman saw him creeping close.

"Water," Altman said, and repeated it in Sena.

The dwarf scuttled away on his wounded feet and was soon back, approaching Altman with an enamel cup. But, leaning, he stumbled and lost it. The women laughed and clapped, excited by the spectacle—the slumped man, the patch of dampened dust, the dirty cup, the dwarf on his knees.

Encouraged by the laughter, the dwarf stood and snatched the cup. More people came to see—the orphan boys, some men kicking through the dust with their shirts piled on their heads to keep off the sun. Altman was surrounded by the entire village, it seemed. But only the dwarf dared to come near him, jabbing at Altman with his own walking stick. Altman was helpless to resist, and when he looked up the dwarf was rushing at him, wild-eyed, with a bruised eager face. Altman tumbled into the dust, and a cry went up. The dwarf began kicking him, straining with grunts, to the rejoicing of the crowd.

Altman's tongue was so swollen when he woke that he could barely breathe. He was still clothed, on his string bed in the hut.

"Chief." It was Manyenga, murmuring the word.

Zizi was there, too, creeping toward him with the same kind of enamel cup that the dwarf had offered him. Altman raised himself and drank, expecting water, but it was thick and salty—soup. Throughout the day, he lapped at it; he sensed it easing his throat, seeping into his flesh, his body greedy for the salt.

In the morning, he sat up with a clearer head and pulled out the basket that he'd shoved under his bed. He knew before he opened it that all the money was gone.

The spell of dehydration had made him watchful. He sat for the rest of the day in the shade of his veranda, moving only to slap at flies. As the sun dropped to the level of the trees at the edge of the clearing, he snapped a branch from the tree that overhung his hut and made himself a new stick. Followed by Zizi and the dwarf, he walked along the barrier of elephant grass and crossed the clearing, pushed through the waist-high weeds to the ruined school. By a decaying stump he saw the puff adder, though it was almost indistinguishable from the flakes of old bark, thickened inside a widened cleft of the wood.

He was studying the adder when Manyenga appeared, but warily, keeping his distance, because he understood that Altman, staring hard at something that he could not see, was probably looking at a snake.

"I've been expecting you," Altman said.

"Chief," Manyenga said with a head shake of respect.

"We go to the *boma* tomorrow."

"I am hoping, Father."

"You know why."

"I am knowing, Father. We are needing."

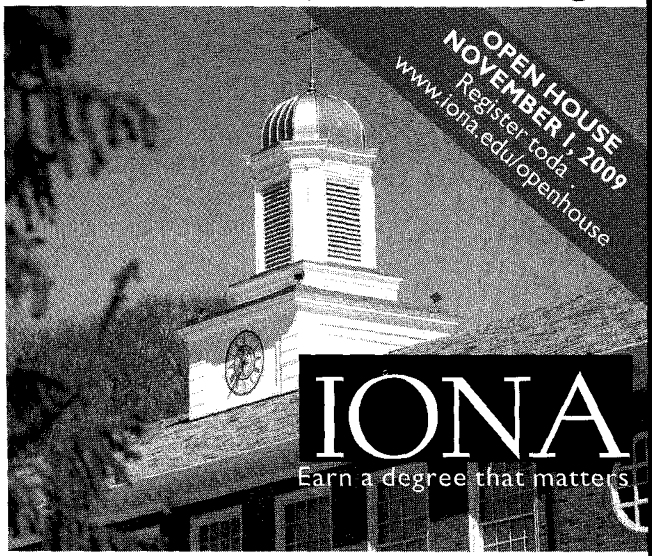
Now the man was uncertain, clumsy in his politeness, eager to please.

Zizi and the dwarf had dropped back. Manyenga leaned toward Altman and, without pointing, but nodding in a knowing way, he whispered, "She is waiting you."

Although it was dusk, there was still enough light from the reddened sky for Altman to see, at the far edge of the clearing, women holding babies, some old men, the orphan boys, and girls with firewood on their heads. It was the same crowd that had encouraged the dwarf to attack him when he'd fainted, but the mood was different. He had not seen them watching him like this since he'd first arrived in Malabo and had been welcomed with apprehension. In his days of illness and of being thwarted and robbed, he had almost forgotten how fearful they once were.

Manyenga turned and called out in English, "Kill a chicken for the chief!," and then repeated it in his own language.

Altman smiled, and saluted, as he had that first day, but this time without hope. ♦



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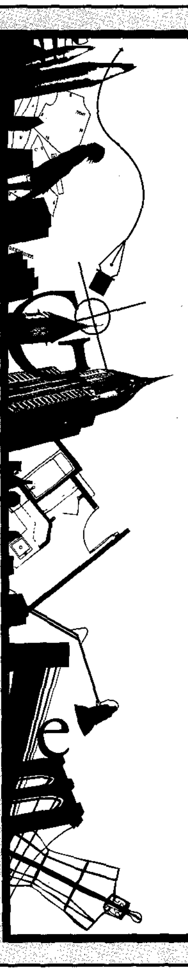

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Earhart in 1928, when she became famous as the first woman to fly across the Atlantic, even though, she protested, she was only a pass

years later, she made the flight solo.

THE CRITICS

A CRITIC AT LARGE

MISSING WOMAN

Amelia Earhart's flight.

BY JUDITH THURMAN

For my tenth birthday, I got the present of my dreams: a piece of Amelia Earhart luggage. It was a small overnight case made of aluminum, with rounded corners, and covered in blue vinyl. Between the latches was a little plaque with an ersatz, feminine signature. (Earhart's actual signature was loopy and uneven, with a runic-looking "A.") I had nowhere to go, so I kept the case under my bed and filled it with dolls' clothes—a use, I suspect, of which Earhart would have disapproved. Play that prepared a young girl for domesticity was anathema to her ideals. When she lectured at colleges—as she did frequently, to promote careers for women, especially in aviation—she urged the coeds to focus on majors dominated by men, like engineering, and to postpone marriage until they had got a degree. On Earhart's own wedding day, in 1931, the thirty-three-year-old bride handed her forty-three-year-old groom, George Palmer Putnam, a remarkable letter, which read:

> You must know again my reluctance to marry, my feeling that I shatter thereby chances in work which means so much to me. . . . In our life together I shall not hold you to any medieval code of faithfulness to me, nor shall I consider myself bound to you similarly. . . . I may have to keep some place where I can go to be myself now and then, for I cannot guarantee to endure at all the confinements of even an attractive cage.

The place where Earhart went to be herself was the cockpit of a plane, and that may have been the place where she died. On July 2, 1937, she became the world's most famous missing person when her twin-engine Lockheed Electra disappeared in the vicinity of Howland Island, a speck in the Pacific about midway between Australia and Hawaii, where the Department of the Interior had built her a landing strip. She and her navigator, Fred Noonan, were attempting to circumnavigate the equator, a feat for the record books, although pilots before them (all male) had rounded the globe at least six times by shorter routes, and commercial transpacific air service had recently been inaugurated. Critics accused Earhart posthumously of embarking on a capricious joyride that ultimately cost taxpayers millions of dollars, the estimated tab for a huge rescue mission authorized by President Roosevelt, Earhart's fan and friend. Even some of her staunchest admirers disapproved of the last flight. Earhart's biographer Susan Butler quotes one of them, Captain Hilton Railey, who had helped to launch her career. She was, he wrote, "caught up in the hero racket."

Earhart, however, was a heroic figure to millions of her contemporaries, and she still counts as one. She achieved fame dramatically, in 1928, as the first woman to cross the Atlantic in a plane, the Friendship, albeit only as a passenger. Railey had recruited her on behalf of Mrs. Frederick E. Guest, née Amy Phipps, a steel heiress and sportswoman who was underwriting the expedition. She had planned to play the starring role herself, until her husband, a former British Cabinet minister, expressed his

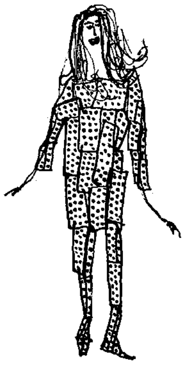
ABOVE: PHILIPPE WEISSBECKER; OPPOSITE: BETTMANN/CORBIS

alarm (three women fliers, including a princess, had recently perished in crashes). Railey was commissioned to find a substitute, and Guest stipulated that, ideally, she should be an aviator but, more important, "the right sort of girl." (The wrong sort of girl was her rival in the race to Europe, Mabel Boll, a flamboyant former actress who was known as the Queen of Diamonds. As Guest later put it to her daughter, "It just wouldn't do.")

Wilmer (Bill) Stultz, the pilot of the Friendship, who had defected from the Boll party, and Louis (Slim) Gordon, the mechanic, had done the actual flying, and Earhart tried to remind a besotted press and ecstatic crowds hailing her as "Lady Lindy" that she had really been just "a sack of potatoes." In 1932, however, she legitimatized the title by flying the Atlantic on her own, becoming the first woman and the second person, five years after Charles Lindbergh, to do so. (Congress awarded her the Distinguished Flying Cross, a wing-shaped decoration that she wore with her pearls.) In 1935, she was the first pilot to solo across the Pacific—from Honolulu to Oakland—and to solo non-stop from Los Angeles to Mexico.

Earhart also made or broke a slew of other records, and few Americans would not have recognized her in the street. Her image was managed aggressively by Putnam, a scion of the publishing house G. P. Putnam's Sons, and one of the first über-agents. He specialized in celebrity true-life adventure stories, and he had signed up Lindbergh to chronicle his flight to Paris for the *Times* (which paid him sixty thousand dollars), then turned the articles into a book that sold some six hundred thousand copies. Even before Putnam met Earhart, he had caught wind of the Guest project—and his next best-seller. By the time the Friendship took off, he had a ten-thousand-dollar deal for Earhart's firsthand story, and a file of publicity shots that played up her resemblance to Lindbergh. (They were both lean, fair Midwesterners with winning smiles.) Her legend, to a large degree, was Putnam's creation. He brokered her lecture tours, book contracts, columns, product endorsements, and media exposure, and he was so proprietary that a rival of Earhart's described him as her Svengali. She, however, was the real mesmerist. "Amelia Earhart: Image and Icon," a handsomely designed album of their teamwork as self-promoters—portraits, press clippings, ads, and illustrations—was published two years ago, with notes and commentary by the editors, Kristen Lubben and Erin Barnett, and essays by Butler and Susan Ware.

Ware regards Earhart's pose of Lindberghian diffidence with critical amusement. She quotes the great aviator Elinor Smith, who was still flying in 2001, at eighty-nine: "Amelia was about as shy as Muhammad Ali." The abuse of the term "icon" incites iconoclasm, or ought to. Earhart was saintlike only as a martyr to her own ambition, who became an object of veneration and is periodically resurrected—her unvarnished glamour, like a holy man's body, still miraculously fresh. Embraced by feminists, she was featured on a 1976 cover of *Ms.*, which promised a story "BETTER THAN THE MYTH." Read closely, however, Earhart's life is, in part, the story of a charismatic dilettante who lectured college girls about ambition yet never bothered to earn a degree. In the nineteen-nineties, Apple and the Gap both featured her in ad campaigns—the Gap to sell khaki trousers, Apple to promote its corporate image of nonconformity. The slogan that appeared with a gauzy, doe-eyed photograph of Earhart in a white helmet was "Think Different." (She thought of herself not only as different but as a special case to whom most ground rules didn't apply.) Three Hollywood movies, starring Rosalind Russell, Diane Keaton, and Amy Adams, have told a version of her story, and a new one, "Amelia," directed by Mira Nair, with Hilary Swank in the title role and Richard Gere as Putnam, will open in October. The script is based on two biographies, "The Sound of Wings," by Mary Lovell (1989), and Butler's definitive "East to the Dawn" (1997); and on "Amelia Earhart: The Mystery Solved" (1999), by Elgen M. Long, a veteran pilot, and his wife, Marie K. Long. (All three books are being reissued this fall.)



There were, in fact, other famous female aces in the early decades of aviation. All of them were daring—some were said to be better pilots than Earhart—and many of them were killed and forgotten. If Earhart became an "icon," it was, in part, because women who aspired to excel in any sphere, at a high altitude, looked upon her as their champion. But it was also because the unburied come back to haunt us.

Earhart had already tried to circle the globe once in 1937, flying westward from Oakland, but she had crashed taking off in Honolulu. Determined to try again, she coaxed additional funds from her sponsors, and "more or less mortgaged the future," she wrote. The plane, hyped as a "flying laboratory" (it wasn't clear what she planned to test, beyond her own mettle and earning power), was shipped back to California for repairs, and, once Putnam had renegotiated the necessary landing clearances and technical support, she and Noonan set off again, on June 1st, this time flying eastward—weather patterns had changed. A month and more than twenty-two thousand miles later, they had reached Lae, New Guinea, the jumping-off place for the longest and most dangerous lap of the journey. The Electra's fuel tanks could keep them aloft for, at most, twenty-four hours, so they had almost no margin of error in pinpointing Howland, about twenty-five hundred miles away. Noonan was using a combination of celestial navigation and dead reckoning. They had a radio, but its range was limited.

Early on July 2nd, on a slightly overcast morning, about eighteen hours into the flight, Earhart told radiomen on the Itasca, a Coast Guard cutter stationed off Howland to help guide her down, that she was flying at a thousand feet and should soon be "on" them, but that her fuel was low. Although the Itasca had been broadcasting its position, so that Noonan could take his bearings and, if necessary, correct the course, they apparently couldn't receive the transmissions, nor apparently could they see the billows of black smoke that the cutter was pumping out. Earhart's last message was logged at 8:43 A.M. No au-

LOVE'S PHOTOGRAPH (OR FATHER AND SON)

Detected little things: a peach-pit
basket watch-chain charm, an ivory
cross wound with ivory ivy, a natural
cross. The Tatoosh Mountains, opaque
crater lakes, a knickerbockered boy
who, drowned, smiles for a seeming ever
on ice skates on ice-skate-scratched
ice, an enlarged scratched snapshot.
Taken, taken. Mad charges corrupt to
madness their sane nurses. Virginia
creeper, Loose Tooth tanned black snake-
skins, shot crows for crow wings for
a black servant's hat, lapped hot milk,
flung mud in a Bible reader's crotch:
"You shouldn't read the Bible nekkid!"
Family opals, selfishness changes hands.
Tatoosh Mountains, opaque crater lakes,
find me the fish skeleton enclosed in
a fish skeleton (fish ate fish) he had.

—*James Schuyler*

thenticated trace of the Electra, or of its crew, has ever been found.

After twenty-five years of research, the Longs concluded that "a tragic sequence of events"—human error, faulty equipment, miscommunication—"doomed her flight from the beginning," and that Earhart and Noonan were forced to ditch in shark-infested waters close to Howland, where the plane sank or broke up. There is, however, an alternative scenario—a chapter from Robinson Crusoe. It is supported with methodical, if controversial, research by Ric Gillespie, the author of "Finding Amelia" (2006), which has just been republished.

Gillespie is a former airline crash investigator who is notably unimpressed with his subject. (He describes Earhart as an "average" pilot and has little interest in her life or achievements.) He has distanced himself from the kooks and the conspiracy theorists who have suggested, at different times, that Earhart was on a hushed-up mission to spy on the Japanese, who interned her; that she became Tokyo Rose; or that she returned secretly to America and lived out her days as a housewife in New Jersey. In 1988, he launched the Earhart Project, which is devoted to solving what he calls the "Holy Grail of aviation mysteries." Gillespie recently announced that next May he will lead his ninth expedition to the Pacific island where he believes that Earhart landed, and, for a while, survived as a castaway.

Nikumaroro, formerly Gardner Island, is an atoll about four hundred miles southeast of Howland. At low tide, it is surrounded by a broad, flat apron of coral where a plane could safely touch down. The interior is covered with dense tropical vegetation bordering a lagoon. In 1929, a steamer went aground on the reef, and when its crew was rescued it left behind a cache of provisions. The atoll was deserted until 1938, when it became one of the last outposts of the British Empire to be colonized, and was settled by natives of the Gilbert Islands. (A prolonged drought forced the inhabitants to abandon Nikumaroro in the nineteen-sixties.)

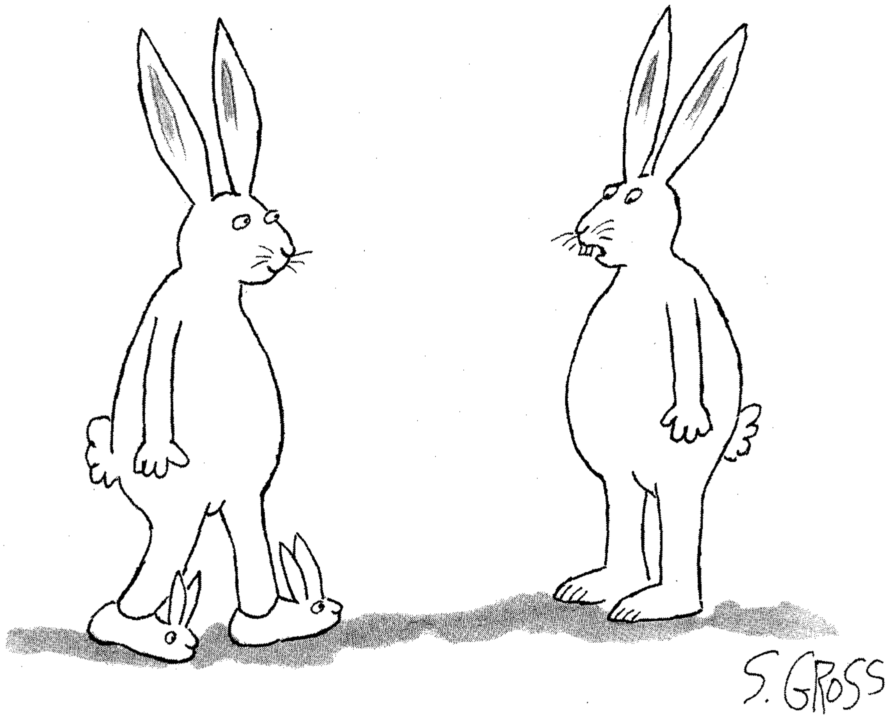
In 1940, a colonial administrator and his work party found a liqueur bottle and some corks, a human skull and some bones, the partial sole of a woman's shoe, parts of a man's shoe, and a sextant box. (Noonan had a mariner's sextant on board.) A year later, the skull and the bones were examined by a British doctor on Fiji. The relics subsequently vanished, but when the doctor's notes came to light, in the nineteen-nineties, they were reviewed by forensic anthropologists. Their verdict, according to Gillespie, is that they probably belonged to a female, about five feet seven (Earhart was an inch taller), of Northern European origin.

Gillespie's case is circumstantial; Butler and the Longs are among the informed skeptics who take issue with it. But it rests on more than a secondhand analysis of missing body parts: unexplained distress calls from the mid-Pacific on Earhart's frequency which have long been discounted as "freak receptions," or as the work of a hoaxer; "signs of recent habitation" seen from the air on July 9, 1937, by a Navy pilot who was searching the area but saw no one alive; artifacts made by the islanders from scavenged material consistent with an Electra; the last line of position that Earhart radioed to the Itasca, which leads straight from Howland to Nikumaroro. But only a DNA sample can lay Earhart's ghost to rest. That, Gillespie hopes, is what the underbrush and the sands will yield.

Had Earhart returned, she would have celebrated her fortieth birthday on July 24th. Only a few intimates, however, knew her true age. She began shaving a year off at twenty-two, when she enrolled in an extension program at Columbia University, to take premed classes, and she later shaved off another. Her birthday was evidently on her mind in Miami, where the Electra was getting a final tune-up from mechanics at Pan Am, and she spoke with an old friend, Carl Allen, the aviation correspondent for the *Herald Tribune*. He told her frankly, Butler writes, that he judged her chances of success at "fifty-fifty," and she didn't argue, noting that she was worried for Noonan's sake but not for her own: "As far as I know I've only got one obsession—a small and probably typically feminine horror of growing old—so I won't feel completely cheated if I fail to come back." Allen, who had covered her career from its outset, might have reminded her of another obsession: to keep proving her singularity.

That "typically feminine" bit of vanity about her age was atypical of a woman who, from childhood, had refused to let her sex either limit or define her. Even in her late thirties, Earhart looked like an adolescent boy who had chopped off his own hair. She was lanky and nonchalant, with no hips or breasts—no visible womanliness—to speak of. One learns from Butler that she flew wearing men's underpants (they were apparently superior to a woman's for the purposes of a quick pee). For public appearances—at White House dinners, in a ticker-tape parade, on the lecture circuit—her wardrobe was unfrilly but elegant, and for a while she designed and modelled her own fashion label, an undistinguished line of tailored dresses and soft, two-piece ensembles. But in her flight gear—a jumpsuit or jodhpurs ("breeks"); flat, lace-up knee boots; a white shirt and a man's tie; a bomber jacket or a leather coat—she seems, at least by the codes of this century, flagrantly androgynous. Butler doesn't raise the question of Earhart's possible bisexuality, and one has to wonder if she put it to any of her sources. She does, however, make a point of noting that two conspicuously virile men donated their boxers, in one case, and their briefs, in the other, to Earhart's wardrobe: her husband and her lover. The lover was "undoubtedly" Eugene Vidal—an Olympic athlete, West Point football captain, flier, airline executive, frequent house guest of the Putnams, and, largely thanks to Earhart's friendship with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, the director of a new agency, the Bureau of Air Commerce. (Butler bases her certainty of the affair on suggestions of it in the diary of Amelia's secretary, and on speculations voiced by Vidal's widow, Katharine, and by Gore Vidal, the son of his first marriage.) When the bureau was reorganized, in 1936, and Vidal was fired, Earhart wrote a breathtakingly cheeky letter to Eleanor, withdrawing a promise to campaign for F.D.R.'s reëlection unless her protégé was reinstated. The President was said to have guffawed at Earhart's nerve, but a day later Vidal's job was saved.

As far as one knows, Earhart's secret erotic life was heterosexual. Gender, however, is a bell curve, and on that curve she is an epicene, at least in the grammatical sense of the word: that of a noun that has one form to denote either sex ("doctor" or "friend," as opposed to "heroine" or "aviatrix"). Unlike the cross-dressing sexual rebels of the Belle Époque, whose intention was to be outrageous, Earhart—whose intention was to stay aloft both as a pilot and as a celebrity—projected a confusing mixture of traits with such an aura of virtue and assurance that she disarmed received ideas about femininity, even those of conservatives. Kristen Lubben quotes one of their paeans, published in 1928, which deplores the "decadence" of a generation slipping by stages "from sly gin-guzzling to a calculated harlotry." Earhart, the writer declares, is the antidote to those shameless flappers: "Hers is the healthy curiosity of the clean mind and the strong body. . . . She will become a symbol of new womanhood." Yet Putnam, the press, and, no doubt, Earhart herself were aware that there was something troubling about her appearance that had to be neutralized. Her photo spreads, Lubben writes, were often laid out like a book of paper dolls, in which pictures of the cavalier in trousers and leather were juxtaposed with pictures of the well-bred lady in a long skirt, a fur wrap, a girlish middy, or an evening gown, her arms full of flowers.



"You are one sick rabbit."

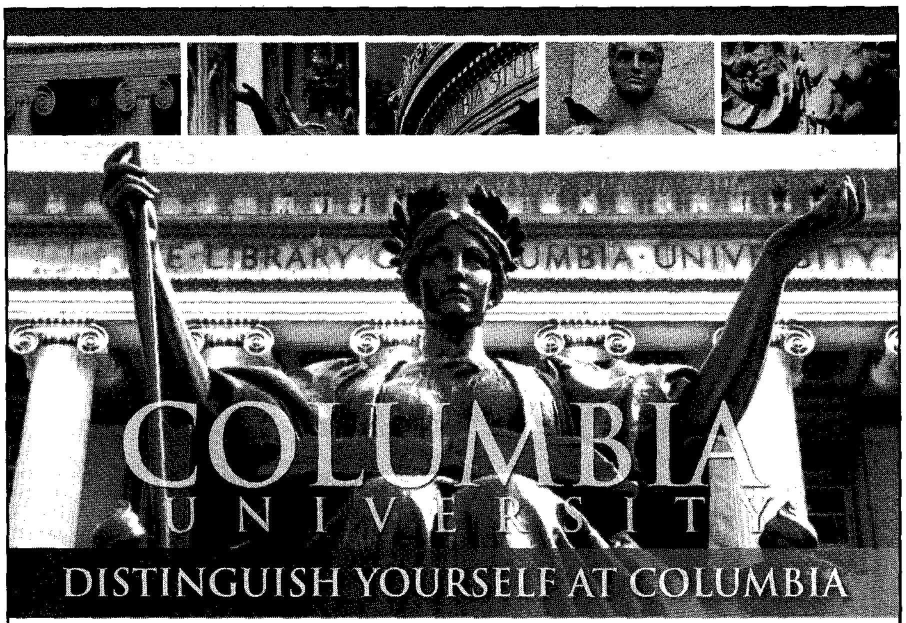
Putnam's Barnumesque title for Earhart's first book, published in 1928, was "20 Hrs. 40 Min., Our Flight in the Friendship: The American Girl, First Across the Atlantic by Air, Tells Her Story." Earhart was a "girl" of thirty-one passing for twenty-nine, but no one can argue with her purity as a product of America. On her mother's side, she descended from the Puritans and from Quaker shipowners who arrived with William Penn. One of her paternal ancestors, Johann Earhardt, survived the winter at Valley Forge. Both branches of the family tree produced pioneers. Their boldness in facing the unknown was part of Amelia's heritage, but so was a patrician confidence of her place in the world.

Amelia was born in 1897, in a Gothic mansion on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River, in Atchison, Kansas. Her mother, Amy, was the daughter of Alfred Otis, a wealthy lawyer, and of Millie Harres, who had grown up in Philadelphia society and never quite overcame her nostalgia for it. Amy defied her father to marry Edwin Earhart, the son of a destitute Lutheran minister, who had worked his way through law school but settled for a lazy practice as what one in-law called "a claims chaser." Otis bought the couple a house in Kansas City and helped with their expenses, yet the Earharts—he a dreamer who tinkered with inventions and became a drunk, she a child of privilege, both incurable spendthrifts—still ran out of money. (In later life, Amelia, like her grandfather, and with some of the same contempt, supported her mother. Accompanying the remittance checks, Susan Ware observes, were "peremptory" letters full of scolding and condescension that betrayed an imperious streak that was well hidden from the world.)

Amelia's sister, Muriel, was born in 1900, and that year Amy sent her older daughter, a precociously self-sufficient toddler, to live with the Otises, in Atchison. That, apparently, is where she learned to finesse the conflicting demands of her own nature for risk and freedom and those of convention and propriety embodied in an anxious grandmother. In 1908, Edwin took a job in Des Moines as a claims agent for the Rock Island railroad. For the next eight years, the Earharts moved from city to city in the Midwest, as Edwin's drinking inexorably destroyed his prospects. ("There are two kinds of stones," Earhart wrote of life with her father, "one of which rolls.") They sometimes lived in unheated rooms, kept a boarding house, or camped with relatives.

After years of litigation with her brother, Amy finally extracted her share of the Otis patrimony, and sent Amelia, at nineteen, to a ritzy boarding school in Philadelphia. Many of her classmates were content to be "finished," but Amelia kept a scrapbook of clippings about self-starting women: a fire lookout, a police commissioner, an engineer. Her plans, after graduation, were to attend Bryn Mawr, but they changed abruptly on a Christmas holiday in Toronto, where she and Amy were visiting Muriel. The city was filled with wounded soldiers. Amelia dropped out of school, enrolled in a nursing course, and volunteered at a military hospital. When Canada was hit by the Spanish-flu pandemic in June of 1918, Amelia caught pneumonia from her patients, and her lungs were never quite cured.

In her time off, Amelia visited a military airfield. "They were terribly young, those air men, young and eager," she wrote in "20 Hrs. 40 Min." "Aviation . . . inevitably attracted the romanticists." Whether or not she saw herself as one of them, she would come to do so. She called herself "a hobo of the air," and described her early flights as "vagabonding." In the meantime, she gave up on the idea of a career in medicine after a year at Columbia, and joined her par-



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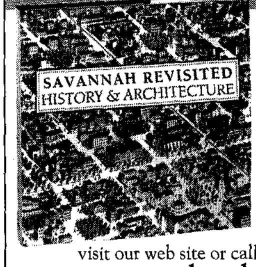

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ents in Los Angeles, in a spacious house on West Fourth Street which, as usual, they couldn't afford. Out of filial duty, or perhaps, as she put it, as a "sunkist victim of inertia," Amelia lived with them for the next three years.

The holy terrors in the annals of fiction and biography—spunky tomboys who, when forced into a dress, hike it up and climb a tree—have often been their fathers' daughters. Edwin encouraged Amelia's exploits, and a sense of their complicity as two profligate rolling stones stirs beneath the clichés of her prose. He had often given her the kinds of present that a man buys his son: a baseball bat, a football, a .22-calibre rifle, which she wanted for shooting rats. A letter that Amelia left for Edwin, in the event of her death, before the Friendship flight, reads like the stoic farewell of a manly boy soldier to his sire: "Hooray for the last grand adventure! I wish I had won, but it was worthwhile anyway. You know that. I have no faith we'll meet anywhere again, but I wish we might."

The dry valleys of Southern California were a cradle of aviation, and it was Edwin who took his daughter to her first air meet, south of Los Angeles, and arranged for her first "trial hop" in a plane. Thoroughly smitten, Amelia was "ready at any price" to take lessons, and after only a few hours in the air she decided to buy her first plane, an experimental Kinner Airster. Amy gave her the two thousand dollars for it, and Amelia made some gestures to defray her expenses. But she quit one job after another—as a clerk at the phone company, as an amateur photographer, and, with a partner in the construction business, hauling gravel. Her spare time was devoted to flying, and, in 1923, having learned to "stunt," she was a featured performer in an air rodeo.

Among the admirers of her bravado was the Earharts' new boarder. (They had lost a chunk of Amy's inheritance in a disastrous mining venture promoted by Amelia.) Sam Chapman, an engineer from Marblehead, Massachusetts, was five years Amelia's senior. They played tennis and discussed philosophy, Butler writes, and he shared her progressive ideals, including, apparently, her notions of equality between a husband and a wife. Before he left California, in 1924, he asked her to marry him, and she accepted.

That year was a watershed for the family. The Earharts' marriage finally foundered, Amelia's lung trouble recurred, and she sold her plane. But, rather than use the proceeds to pay her hospital bill, she blithely bought a roadster nicknamed the Yellow Peril. Back in New York, she reënrolled at Columbia, but early in 1925 she dropped out yet again and moved in with Amy and Muriel, who were living outside Boston. She took a math course at Harvard Summer School, then applied, unsuccessfully, for a scholarship to M.I.T. Next, she found a job teaching English as a second language, and worked at a psychiatric hospital, where, according to Butler, "she lasted only a few months before deciding to leave." At that juncture, typically aimless though atypically depressed, she heard of a vocational-guidance service, the first of its kind, that was run by and for women. In filling out the application, she "lied—extensively" about her experience and credentials.

In 1928, when Putnam and Railey were prospecting for "the right sort of girl" to replace Mrs. Guest, Railey called an acquaintance in the Boston chapter of the National Aeronautic Association, Rear Admiral Reginald Belknap. He told Railey about "a young social worker who flies." She was, he added, "a thoroughly fine person. Call Denison House and ask for Amelia Earhart." Denison was a settlement house in South Boston where Earhart ran night-school classes in English and supervised the nursery and the activities for girls. Two years before Railey's call changed her life, an employment counsellor had sent Earhart for an interview. Denison's director, Marion Perkins, was intrigued, she wrote, by the applicant's "quiet sense of humor, the frank direct look in her grey eyes," and took a chance on her. So, it would seem, did everyone.

It is hard to know whether, or how long, Earhart would have stayed in social work if Railey hadn't offered her a shot at glory. She could, for a while, throw herself into a high-minded endeavor, but she lacked the discipline to see it through. She dallied with Chapman for six years, breaking their engagement when she became famous. (He never married.) She warned Putnam that she was incapable of fidelity, and she apparently made good on her threat. Her flights were feats of courage and endurance, but compared with the achievements of the women in her scrapbook their significance was ephemeral. Her unique experience might have yielded a memoir that would still be read, yet she published only three slight books, one of them posthumous, which were rushed out, for commercial reasons, in weeks. When people asked Earhart why she flew, she liked to say, "For the fun of it," and "The Fun of It" was the title of her second book. Gravity was uncongenial to her, and she made light even of grave things. There was ether in the very sound of her name. Physically, too, she seemed like an airy spirit—Ariel, impatient to be set free.

The Earhart property that, to a layman, seems to have the greatest cinematic potential was not one that Mira Nair did, or perhaps could, acquire. "I Was Amelia Earhart," a best-selling novel by Jane Mendelsohn, was published in 1996. It is a desert-island romance based, in part, on an article by Gillespie, and Mendelsohn imagines that Earhart and Noonan have landed on an atoll like Nikumaroro. Amelia builds a lean-to by the lagoon, and Noonan constructs a shack with a veranda that looks out to sea. In the early days of their ordeal, they bicker and mourn, but solitude and need draw them together. They fish, forage, and survive by their wits. He plays his harmonica and talks to the birds, stoned on a narcotic root. She decorates her hut with parts from the Electra. The past recedes. Then, one night, Noonan seduces her. Their wild, "unencumbered" sex leads to a state of oneness "more precious than love." And, when he spots a search plane, they hide on the jungle floor, because "they know now that there is no difference between being rescued and being captured."

The torrid prose and the fantasy of surrender are almost a parody of the genre, and Amelia, of all people, knew that there were no idylls, especially between men and women. Yet the ending rings true. It is one that she herself tried to write. She abandons everything, and flies away. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Love and Summer, *by William Trevor (Viking; $25.95).* Trevor's fourteenth novel, set in a provincial Irish town in the mid-fifties, shows his mastery of the genre. In unhurried prose, he sets out the story of an affluent innkeeper, whose life is marred by an illicit affair in her youth; a stoic farmer, who accidentally killed his wife and baby; a "foundling" girl who ends up betrothed to the farmer; and a cash-strapped photographer who has returned to the area to sell his once grand childhood home. Trevor binds the characters together through a series of conflicts that lay bare their pasts and the fault lines of his nation generally: Catholic and Protestant, male and female, wealthy and poor. At the same time, the characters can't be reduced to these collisions, and are memorably unique in both their flaws and their fixations.

The Immortals, *by Amit Chaudhuri (Knopf; $25.95).* Chaudhuri's languid, melancholy novel, set in Bombay during the nineteen-seventies and eighties, traces the relationship between the middle-class Senguptas and their music teacher, Shyamji. Nirmalya Sengupta, a son of privilege, urges purity in art—the ustads, ragas, and shrutis of Indian classical music—while Shyamji succumbs to the exigencies of the marketplace and Hindi film music. (Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle, sisters who have dominated popular singing in India for the past few decades, occasionally appear as the embodiment of his capitulation.) Not much happens—Sengupta's father ascends the corporate ladder, his mother takes part in recitals and shyly hopes for a record contract, and Sengupta himself discovers philosophy—but Chaudhuri lovingly evokes a fractious, contradictory city caught between tradition and modernization.

Hadrian and the Triumph of Rome, *by Anthony Everitt (Random House; $32).* Everitt completes a biographical trilogy—his previous subjects were Cicero and Augustus—with the life of Hadrian, "the most enigmatic of ancient Romans." Emperor from 117 to 138 A.D., Hadrian styled himself *princeps*, or first among equals, and his reversal of his predecessors' expansionist policies contributed to an era of prosperity and relative calm. He was unapologetically Hellenic, a poet and a dabbler in magic, and he kept in his retinue a young male lover whom he later deified. If Hadrian is indeed an enigma, it's because so few accounts of his life have survived, and this is where Everitt—whose books rely heavily on primary sources—runs into difficulty. One gets a clear and compelling sense of Hadrian's times, but the Emperor himself remains tantalizingly unknowable.

The Natural History of Unicorns, *by Chris Lavers (William Morrow; $26.99).* Around 398 B.C., a Greek traveller to India named Ctesias learned of a "wild ass" that could not be captured alive, and whose single, crimson-tipped horn miraculously cured disease when made into a drinking vessel. In this lively survey, Lavers explores the roots and the evolution of Ctesias' elusive beast, which, he argues, might have been an amalgam of the rhinoceros, the chiru, and the kiang. Over the next twenty-five hundred years, the myth took bizarre twists and turns: although the word "unicorn" appears seven times in the Bible, it crept in only with the Septuagint, when translators needed to describe a horned creature that was "crucially not a cow." Biblical association with Jesus led, in the Middle Ages, to the spreading of the legend of the gentle, goatlike unicorn that could be captured only by a virgin. Lavers capably balances tales of individual enthusiasts with broader cultural considerations to show how the unicorn's "connections with our myth-making reveal much about our engagement with the natural world."

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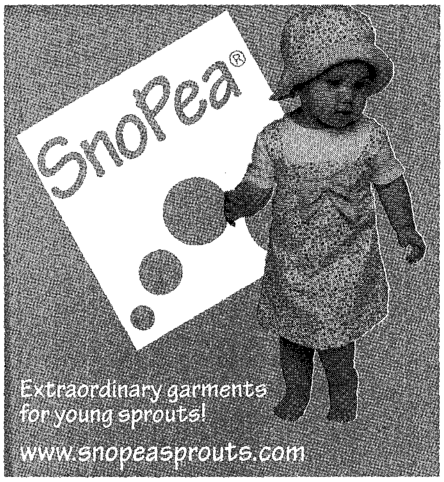
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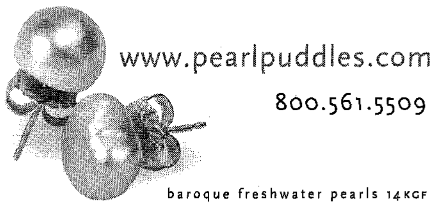
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ON TELEVISION

BAND OF BOARDERS

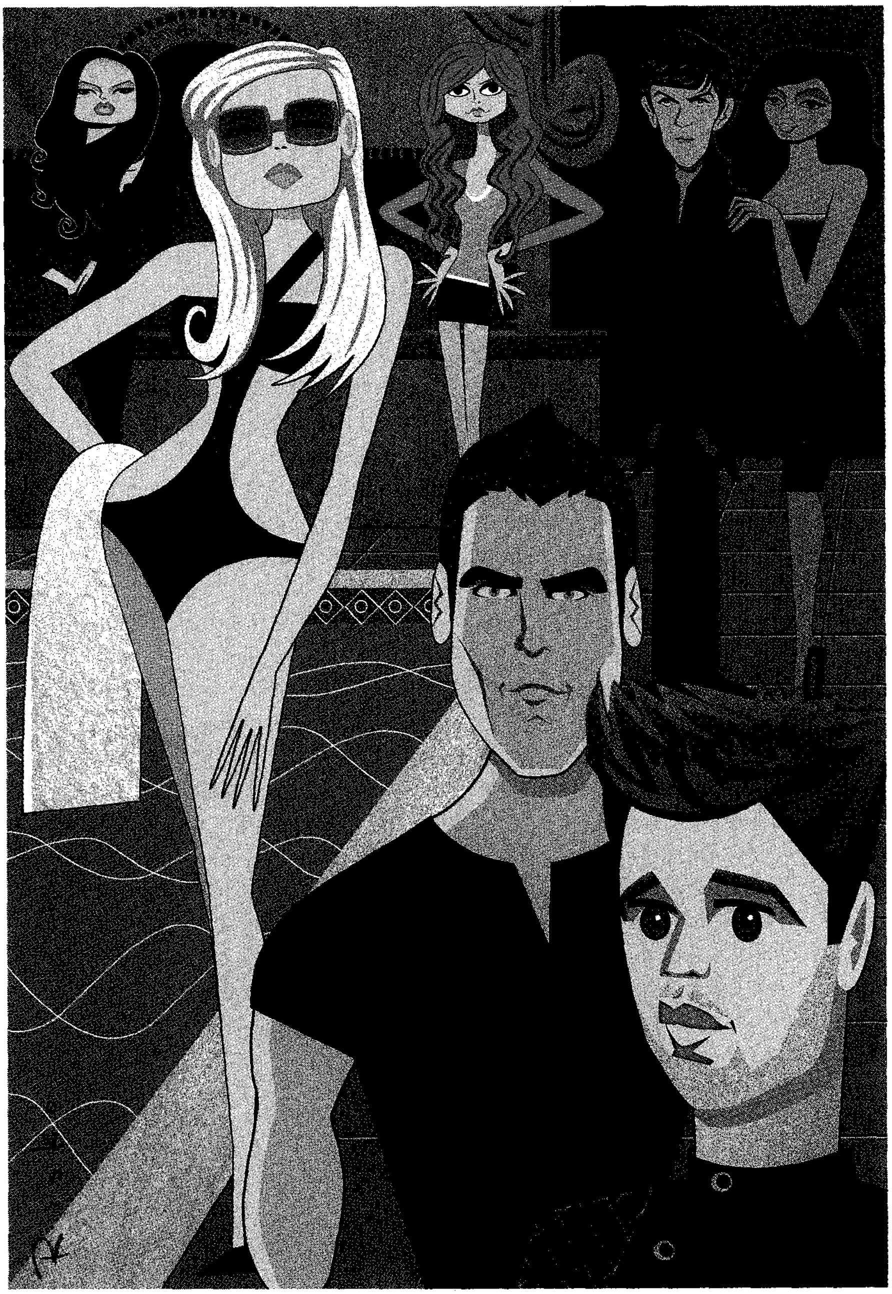
"Melrose Place" revisited.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

If I may extrapolate from my own preferences, television audiences haven't been hungering to see a remake of "Melrose Place," a show that's gone though not entirely forgotten, not because it's on DVD but because it was so tacky, campy, and idiotic—compelling despite not being interesting—that it stuck with you if you stuck with it. So, although it's been ten years since the show was cancelled (it had a good run, petering out after seven seasons), anyone who watched it can easily call up its stable of unstable characters and its absurd plot gyrations and romantic pairings. It was nighttime soap opera, brought to you by Aaron Spelling and his then boy wonder Darren Star, who had previously created "Beverly Hills, 90210"—which is also in remake, now airing on the CW as "90210"—and went on to adapt Candace Bushnell's "Sex and the City" pieces for HBO. (In a real-world Spellingesque twist—unpredictable and yet inevitable—Star and Bushnell fell out when, a few years ago, they came up with shows that were too similar for both to succeed, his being "Cashmere Mafia" and hers being "Lipstick Jungle.") The current king of the TV jungle is Jerry Bruckheimer, with his dark, death-obsessed dramas; Spelling's poolside melodramas were replaced by such reality shows as "The Hills." Turns out you could get that same blend of bad acting, daringly unbelievable storylines, and fantasy for a lot less money by "scripting" it rather than "writing" it. Spelling died in 2006, and a certain kind of grandiosity seems to have gone with him. Last year, his widow, Candy Spelling (mother of Tori, one of the stars of "Beverly Hills, 90210," who went on to have her own reality show), put their famously spectacular house—at about fifty-seven thousand square feet, it's one of the largest cribs in the country—on the market, with an asking price of a hundred and fifty million dollars. She's trading it in for a much, much smaller dwelling—a sixteen-thousand-five-hundred-square-foot condo—in another part of town.

But there's drama in downsizing, too, and, in any case, "Melrose Place" was not primarily about big dreams or fantasies. It was just one dopey thing after another, done cleverly enough to manipulate you into watching it and kind of loving it, whether or not you liked, or even cared about, any of the characters. I watched the show for most of its run, until the point at which the characters, who lived in the same apartment complex in Los Angeles, had gone through all possible romantic combinations with each other and began repeating them, as if their personal history didn't exist. See, at that point, you're not just messing with my head; you're acting as though I didn't have a head. That's where I draw the line. I try, anyway. But watching this random band of boarders was highly entertaining, a "Grand Hotel" set in an ant farm. And then there was the show's killer app, raison d'être, savior, and organizing force, the angel of melodrama who walks the earth under the name Heather Locklear. Locklear was a genuine pleasure to watch—she always came across as a pro and seemed to have a sense of humor about herself. (When she hosted "Saturday Night Live," her gameness in sending up her image as TV's go-to hot blond bad girl confirmed this.) Locklear's character, Amanda Woodward, was a big-deal advertising executive, and multi-adjectival in her moods and whims: vixenish, kittenish, scheming, vulnerable, generous, determined, sad, charming, vengeful, unneurotic. All that—and a landlord, too.

The old "Melrose Place" was on Fox, and the new one is on the CW (as is "90210," which precedes the new "Melrose Place" on the Tuesday-night schedule as of this week), and is a cross between a sequel and a remake—a requel—in that the story includes a couple of the old characters but isn't really about them, and yet the new characters almost completely mirror the old ones. In other words, it's as fresh as yesterday's daisy. It's not entirely unfun, though, to look for differences between "MP1" and "MP2." No one was texting back when "MP1" was on; now you can set a whole series in motion by having a character receive a message saying "In serious trouble. Come Now!" while he's in a loud bar playing tonsil hockey with a woman he's just picked up—he doesn't have to be sitting at home waiting by the phone. (And the tonsil hockey itself is so much more explicit than it used to be; much as one hates to avert one's eyes from the TV, for even half a second, sometimes one simply must.) The not very successful writer is now a filmmaker named Jonah, boyishly dogged and boyishly in touch with his inner nerd, looking for green clovers in the Lucky Charms (that's not a metaphor; he actually does it), and, at twenty-three, his girlfriend says, dubiously, he has "a box of Legos in the closet—that he still plays with." Locklear's new counterpart is Ella (Katie Cassidy, who is David Cassidy's twenty-two-year-old daughter), a junior publicist who doesn't crumple when her job is in jeopardy. No! All steel, she says, "You better believe some stupid merger isn't going to stop me from becoming the next Pat Kingsley." Cassidy has good lines and good timing—but she can forget about filling the stilettos of the Sarah Bernhardt of soaps. The returnees from "MP1" are two big pieces of bad news, Dr. Michael Mancini (Thomas Calabro) and Sydney Andrews (Laura Leighton), who were inexplicably central the first time around. Sydney was chaos made human, and Michael was evil and narcissistic (except when he had amnesia) and yet bizarrely attractive to women. The creative twist here is that Sydney dies in the first episode of "MP2"—she's found dead in the pool—but keeps returning in flashbacks. Crazy Kimberly, one of the original characters, probably won't be returning—the actress who played her, Marcia Cross, is busy with "Desperate Housewives." It remains to be seen whether La Locklear will make an appearance at some point. We can only hope.



A new cast of characters moves into Mr. Spelling's neighborhood.

ROBERT RISKO

Already, there is a lot of plot to chew on. (Among the Internet musings is this one, about the parentage of David, a rich, aimless Melrosian: "Kimberly plotted to abduct Jo's son in Season 3 because the car accident in Season 2 had left her barren. If she had already had a child prior to the beginning of the show, she certainly wouldn't have abandoned him/her to be a doctor in L.A. It is established that Michael is David's father and he didn't even know she was into him until the middle of Season 1, plus Michael used to live in Chicago and Kimberly lived in Cleveland. I highly doubt they crossed paths before he got involved with Jane.") There's a lot of generic up-to-dateness. And the patois of our time is given its due in the show's dialogue: when David is brought in for questioning about Sydney's death, the detective, noting that he has a record, which includes smashing his roommate's jaw with a golf club, goads him by saying, "I guess boarding school can get to you, huh?" To which the surly child of privilege responds, "Douche bags get to me." In the pilot, Lauren, an upstanding medical student, hears the news that her father has been laid off, and, like so many TV characters before her, has to turn to an old, non-medical profession to pay her tuition. Current, or near-current, songs fill the soundtrack; the producers have rounded up some of the usual suspects, such as the Killers and Lily Allen. Over all, the show has a little something, but it doesn't have outstanding curb appeal, and I wouldn't be surprised to see a foreclosure notice in the window sooner rather than later. ♦

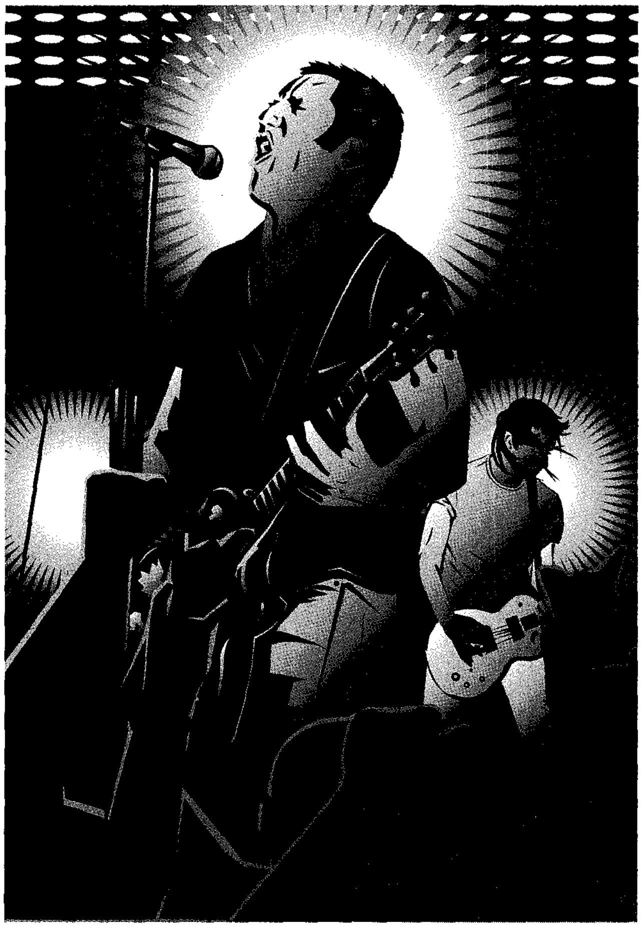
POP MUSIC

HIGH FIDELITY

Music that lives in the headphones of angry teens.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

In 1988, a twenty-three-year-old Cleveland resident named Trent Reznor decided to record several demos of his songs. He'd been playing in local bands since 1984, and had learned a fair amount about recording at a local studio named Right Track, where he'd started as a janitor and eventually become an engineer. Reznor was hoping to be signed to the independent Chicago label Wax Trax and to put out records alongside the aggressive electronic-music bands he admired, like Front 242 and Ministry. Instead, Reznor's demos became the bulk of an album called "Pretty Hate Machine," which was released on the TVT label under the band name Nine Inch Nails and went on to sell more than three million copies.



"Wave Goodbye": the last of the Nine Inch Nails live shows.

QUICKHONEY

Over the past twenty years, Reznor has produced seven Nine Inch Nails albums, and has written, played, and engineered almost all of the music himself. (Additional drummers have appeared on some of the albums, along with a smattering of guest instrumentalists and singers.) The Nine Inch Nails sound has its roots in the dark, minor-key inclinations of British bands like Bauhaus and Depeche Mode, who helped create the aesthetic for gothic rock (a depressive, death-obsessed affect and a lot of black clothing and eyeliner). Reznor was also influenced by the abrasive electronic pulses of industrial music, a trend that started in the nineteen-seventies in England with bands like Cabaret Voltaire and Throbbing Gristle. Throbbing Gristle's songs were menacing first-person narratives about physical and emotional extremes. (In 2003, the leader of the band, Genesis P-Orridge, began undergoing procedures to become "pandrogynous," including getting breast implants.) Industrial music tended to simultaneously embrace and mock fascist inclinations, employing punishing and repetitive forms, painful levels of noise, a lyrical obsession with authoritarian figures, and, visually, a fondness for Soviet-era design. To all of this, Reznor added the basic stuff of rock: loud, distorted guitars. As he told me recently, he wanted the live version of Nine Inch Nails to be a "big meaty rock band."

Nine Inch Nails and bands in their loose cohort have not traditionally been given much room on the radio; aside from a few hits on MTV, this is music that for the past two decades has lived in the headphones of angry teens. The typical Reznor topics are loathing and self-loathing. "Meet Your Master," from "Year Zero" (2007), sounds like the cry of a downtrodden nation, or, at least, a downtrodden high-school basketball team: "You'll do as you're told, used to be the leader, now comes the time to serve. Maybe we'll show some mercy, maybe you'll get what you deserve." It's a direct echo of lines from a song on "Pretty Hate Machine": "Head like a hole, black as your soul, I'd rather die than give you control. Bow down before the one you serve, you're going to get what you deserve." Reznor doesn't have a particularly grim backstory—he grew up with his grandparents, liked to pole fish with his grandfather, took piano lessons, and played Judas Iscariot in his high school's production of "Jesus Christ Superstar"—but he has written some very durable "Fuck you, Man!" songs.

While his lyrical obsessions—disease, darkness, alienation—don't do much to distinguish him from his peers, Reznor does have considerable charisma as a performer. In the late nineties, he went through a period of cocaine and tequila abuse. He was working long hours, alone, in his New Orleans studio, and, as he says, "losing my mind, slipping into addiction." In 2001, he got sober and started working out. He is now a thickly muscled man with cropped hair who favors tight black T-shirts and tighter jeans. Recently, a woman in the crowd at a Nine Inch Nails show at Terminal 5, in New York, put it to me this way: "Trent is sort of a hubba-hubba situation. He's also probably the healthiest guy here."

Reznor is completing a brief tour, which he has dubbed the "Wave Goodbye" tour; he claims that these will be the last Nine Inch Nails live shows for a long time. Sick of "repeating the same day over and over again," he will concentrate on writing music and on developing a futuristic TV series based on "Year Zero." Because his songs rely so heavily on looped samples and relentless, machine-made rhythms, Reznor has had to find musicians skillful enough to play along with lockstep noise. For this tour, he has assembled his strongest lineup yet. His current drummer, twenty-one-year-old Ilan Rubin, auditioned for Reznor last year by sending video clips of himself performing Nine Inch Nails songs. At Terminal 5, all I could see of Rubin was a mane of curly brown hair and long arms whipping through the air. (Reznor told the crowd, "I haven't been able to find a set list yet that can kill him.") The bassist, Justin Meldal-Johnson, switches easily between various electric and acoustic basses, and also plays keyboards and guitar with the more reserved stage presence of someone raised on indie rock. Robin Finck, who played guitar in one incarnation of Guns N' Roses, reproduces some of the dozens of harsh guitar tones Reznor has written over the years, and is not averse to swinging his guitar on its strap like a pendulum and skipping across the stage when Reznor isn't using it.

Reznor spends most of each show planted at the front of the stage with his legs in a runner's stance, gripping the microphone stand with both hands, now and then pogoing with the crowd. He takes phenomenal care in creating his myriad sonic hues, and presents them onstage without pauses or missteps. He's not big on improvisation—a Nine Inch Nails performance has the smooth continuity of a Broadway show or a well-executed airlift. When the band played "March of the Pigs," the guitars and screams and strobe lights all fired at the same moment: "Step right up! March! Push! Crawl right up on your knees!" Songs like "March of the Pigs" typify Reznor's particular talents: lyrics and beats that are simple enough to encourage a visceral response, set against a structured noise that is strange enough to keep things from becoming too predictable.

By the early aughts, Reznor had grown frustrated with the way Nine Inch Nails records were being released and promoted by his label, Interscope Records. "The Internet has decimated their business, and they still don't know how instant messaging works," he told me. He was also depressed by the pressure from the label's head, Jimmy Iovine, to make his records more "urban." As Reznor saw it, "This is simply, How do we smooth off all the rough edges and make you just like what's selling now?" Iovine commissioned a number of hip-hop remixes of Nine Inch Nails songs, all of which Reznor rejected, and Reznor soon ended the relationship. "You know what, Jimmy? Fuck you. Take that beat and shove it up Timbaland's ass."

Reznor started releasing records directly from the Nine Inch Nails Web site. For "Ghosts I-IV" (2008), a long suite of instrumental pieces, he experimented with a variety of price points—a deluxe package of high-fidelity disks and photographic prints, for three hundred dollars; all thirty-six songs, encoded in variety of digital formats, each bundle priced at five dollars; or a download of the first nine tracks on "Ghost I-IV," for free. The most recent Nine Inch Nails album, "The Slip," was posted in its entirety on the Web site and available free of charge. ("This one's on me," Trent told his fans.) The album went on to sell ninety-eight thousand physical CDs, a testament to the size of Reznor's audience.

Reznor's admirers have not stopped responding to his live persona—and to his ability to conjure moments of painful struggle and catharsis—but I'm more interested in what will come of his interest in the quality of sound. As he wrote to me in an e-mail, "Walk into a Best Buy and everyone's obsessed with the highest possible resolution for their TVs. 1080p versus 1080i resolution, hundred-dollar HDMI video cables . . . yet everyone still walks around with those terrible quality white iPod 'earbuds.' " Few producers in the rock world have his sense for detail and raw, sensory pleasure, and he's determined to make the listening experience as high-fidelity as possible. He went on, "I want you to have the same feeling I do sitting in the studio listening to a final mix, surrounded by sound, in heaven." ♦

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Sasha Frere-Jones's pop-music blog.

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

ONLY HUMAN

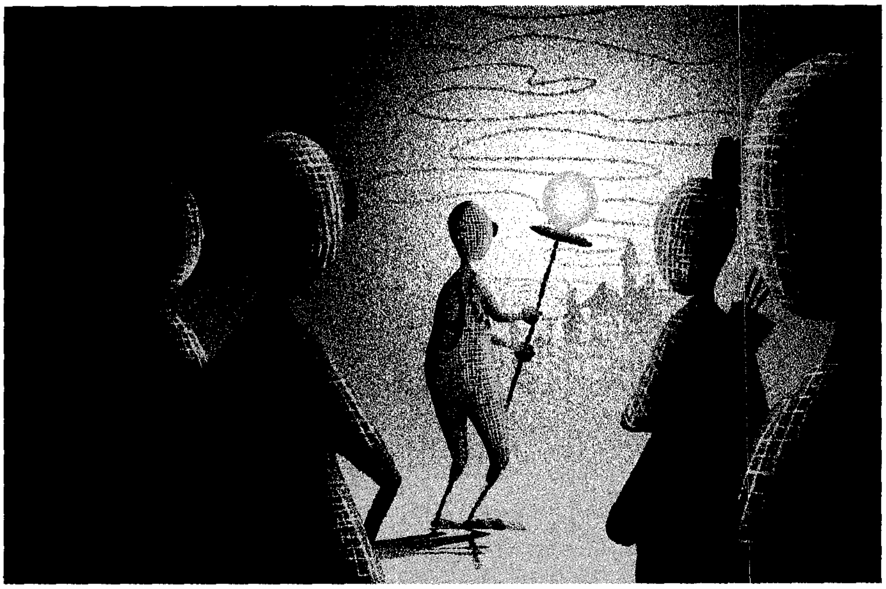
"9" and "District 9."

BY ANTHONY LANE

The heroes of "9" are a wild bunch, and a squashy one to boot. The title character, 9 himself, is woven from a type of sacking, with a funky zipper up the front, as if his creator had spent too long in the front row at Vivienne Westwood shows. His grim-faced elder, 1, comes in a light tweed. Others are closer to cotton or corduroy, while 7, a fighting female, is wrapped in a soft white leather or some such, to match the bird skull that she dons for maximum effect. (Of 6, clad in stripes like a concentration-camp victim, the less said the better; who approved this woeful lapse in taste?) All are the size of Teddy bears, though none, I feel, would soothe your kids to sleep; not just because of the copper digits, pointed and jointed, that 9 appears to have borrowed from Freddy Krueger but because he and the other creatures—the name of whose race or brand we never learn—exist in a state of tireless, uncomforting desperation. It's hard to be anything else, I suppose, at the end of the world.

The landscape that our friends inhabit is fast becoming as familiar, to doomy young filmgoers of today, as Monument Valley was to devotees of Westerns. Bruised old skies, ill winds, dumps of rusted wreckage, whole cities like broken jaws, dotted here and there with sparks of hope: welcome to Apocalypse Lite. It will scarcely be news, to those versed in "Wall-E" and the interminable Terminators, that our planet has yet again succumbed to the ravagings of machinery. "Our blind pursuit of technology only sped us quicker to our doom," we are told in an opening voice-over—nasty, wicked technology, you understand, as opposed to the beneficent, playful variety that allowed Shane Acker, the director of "9," to wield the elaborate computer animations that account for every pixel on his screen. It's the old story: humans build contraptions, and contraptions become self-conscious, which means spending hours in front of the mirror, refusing to dance at parties, and, in a climactic tantrum, cleansing all humans from the spotty face of the Earth.

The story concerns the struggles of 9 and his pals—"all that's left of humanity," allegedly, although I never quite grasped how *Homo sapiens* evolved into minor items of haberdashery—to take arms against a sea of machinery and, in the process, to work out why the task should have fallen to them. The tone, as a result, is a blend of vengeful action picture, punctuated by fireballs, and more peaceable, mystical—and, frankly, nonsensical—ruminations on the nature of destiny. I am still frowning at the finale, during which the souls of the departed rise to Heaven, mosey around for a while, and rain back down as busy green droplets, teeming with fresh life. As eco-salvation goes, the end of "Wall-E" made far more sense, even if James Thurber got there first with his fable entitled "The Last Flower," and the leading question posed by "9" is not "What can I do to save the environment?" but "Who is running Heaven, anyway?" The Almighty has washed his hands of us, and rightly so; you can tell as much from the ruined cathedral in whose bell tower 1 and his sidekicks take refuge, like mini-Quasimodos. The only resident gods are people like Timur Bekmambetov, the director of "Wanted," and Tim Burton, both of them producers on this film, who may be responsible for its dual aroma of the weirdly whimsical and the gothically intense. And here's the strangest thing of all: it works.



Earthly survivors, known by their numbers, in an animated film by Shane Acker.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

How it works, exactly, is hard to fathom. The script, by Pamela Pettler, is a lumberyard of capitalized entities: the Machine, the Beast, the Talisman, the Source. Not to be rude or anything, but what is the Damn Point? "I found him in the Emptiness," 5 says of 9 at the start, which is the kind of line you might have used when introducing a friend to Jean-Paul Sartre, but not now, and certainly not when the friend in question looks like Piglet. Some of the voices—notably the senior ones, belonging to Martin Landau and Christopher Plummer—are grimly convincing, but Elijah Wood's 9 lacks the staunchness of his Frodo. As for the music, it's way too lusty and rambunctious for the setting, although there is one exquisite sequence in which, like Wall-E with his "Hello, Dolly!" video, 9 and 7 listen to an ancient LP of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" on a windup gramophone. Dimly, through the dust, we see an approaching monster, believed dead, but Judy Garland, far from being interrupted, keeps on singing like a bluebird until the horror is right in our faces.

At such moments, Acker comes into his own, operating with tautness and delicacy; he seems engaged less by giant, routine detonations than by the marvellous scene in a cavernous library, staffed by a pair of twittering archivists with socks on their heads, where 9 and his comrades soar up to the shelves, on a swinging arm, in a bid to track down the secret of their survival. Like the Machine screwing and soldering its latest apprentice into life, or 9 constructing a lamp from detritus, Acker somehow stitches together unlikely offcuts into a fully functioning world. You can't say he fleshes it out, for there is no flesh available, but his precision helps you take it on trust, and the opening shot of a thread passing through a needle's eye, with 9 himself being patched and primped as Woody was by the doll doctor in "Toy Story 2," is a wholly fitting detail on which to embark. To subsist neither by preaching nor destroying but by following the modest proverb that tells us to make do and mend: that seems like a manageable dictum for our times. Even sackcloth, as 9 himself proves, can rise from the ashes.

Another nine, another wasteland. "District 9" has been out for a while, but audiences continue to gather, lured by rumors of a hybrid—a writhing, snapping chunk of science fiction that looks and smells like fact. We start in an office; indeed, it could almost be "The Office," with a nervous nerd named Wikus van der Merwe (Sharlto Copley), all halfhearted beard and gulping grin, giving an interview to the camera. If you were told that, less than a couple of hours later, the same fellow would be strapped into the cockpit of a striding cyberweapon, pulverizing all who draw near, like Jeff Bridges at the end of "Iron Man," you'd laugh. But there are more laughs to come, bitter rather than easy, in Neill Blomkamp's formidable feature début, steeped as it is in the ironies of prejudice.

Aliens have landed. Not, for a change, on the East Coast of America but in Johannesburg, which happens to be Blomkamp's home town. The newcomers, numbering millions, are known as prawns, a crude but forgivable jibe; imagine a shrimp cocktail with sprinter's legs and the eyes of an extremely angry cat, and you're there. Though likely to turn hostile if provoked, they're not out to destroy mankind; they're just *here*, and nobody—as we learn from the comments of police, politicians, and aid workers—knows what to do with them. And thus, like so many of the unwanted before them, they are fenced into a township and forced to scavenge. "At least they're keeping them separate from us," a black woman says. Blomkamp has no need to tread heavily here. The movie is instinctively alive to the history of segregation in his native land—and to current tensions, too, like that caused by the vast influx from Mugabe's despoiling of Zimbabwe.

The plot quickens as Wikus, who works in alien relations, is told to oversee the mass deportation of the prawns to a new camp—a task that was made easier for the filmmakers when they found a shantytown, built on landfill near Soweto, from which real South Africans were about to be moved. No wonder the documentary images that are chopped and diced into the narrative (TV reports, closed-circuit footage, and vox pops) lend such natural flavor to the mix, one consequence being that, when the weedy Wikus gets sprayed with essence of prawn and finds himself sprouting a large claw where his hand used to be, we don't shrug it off as an overcooked special effect but accept it as just the kind of hazard that *would* crop up in a culture as crazed and pressurized as this.

"District 9" cost thirty million dollars, or roughly a fifth of the marketing budget for "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen." The double blessing of this thrift is, first, the lived-in scruffiness of the background, with prawns rooting through hillocks of trash or chomping on tins of cat food (their snack of choice), and, second, the low-rent, high-energy presence of the actors—not stars, for whom we would be programmed to root, but ordinary sorts whose fortunes we cannot predict, and for whom our sympathies continually shift and sway. Who would have thought that Wikus could go from bureaucrat to tramp and then to "the most valuable human artifact on earth," all in a single day? Or that he would wind up knocking politely at a prawn's door? Or, best of all, that the prawn himself would be known as Christopher Johnson, the idea being that regular names will make the aliens feel at home? (So much more welcoming than 9 or 7.) You don't feel bamboozled, fooled, or patronized by "District 9," as you did by most of the summer blockbusters. You feel winded, and shaken, and shamed. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM

The Front Row, a blog about movies.

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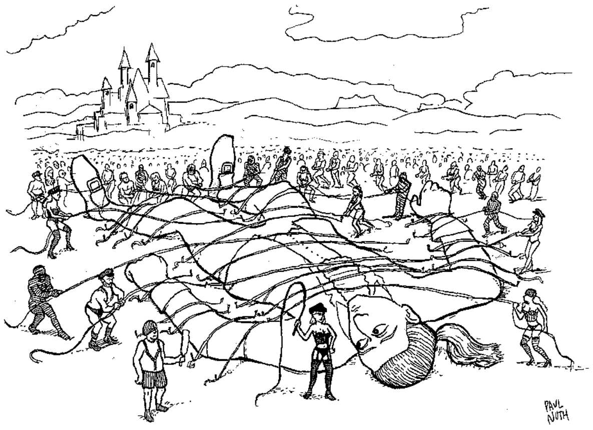
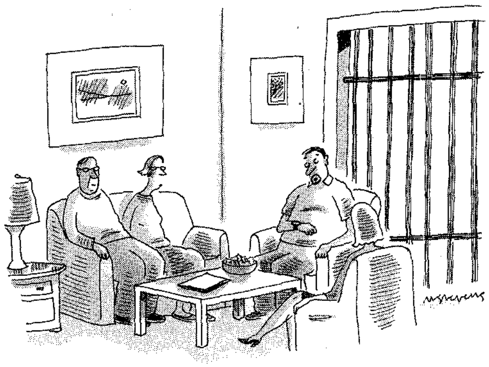
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Danny Shanahan, must be received by Sunday, September 13th. The finalists in the August 31st contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the September 28th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the U.S. or Canada (except Quebec) age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"First time at Euro Disney?"
Addison Koella, Knoxville, Tenn.



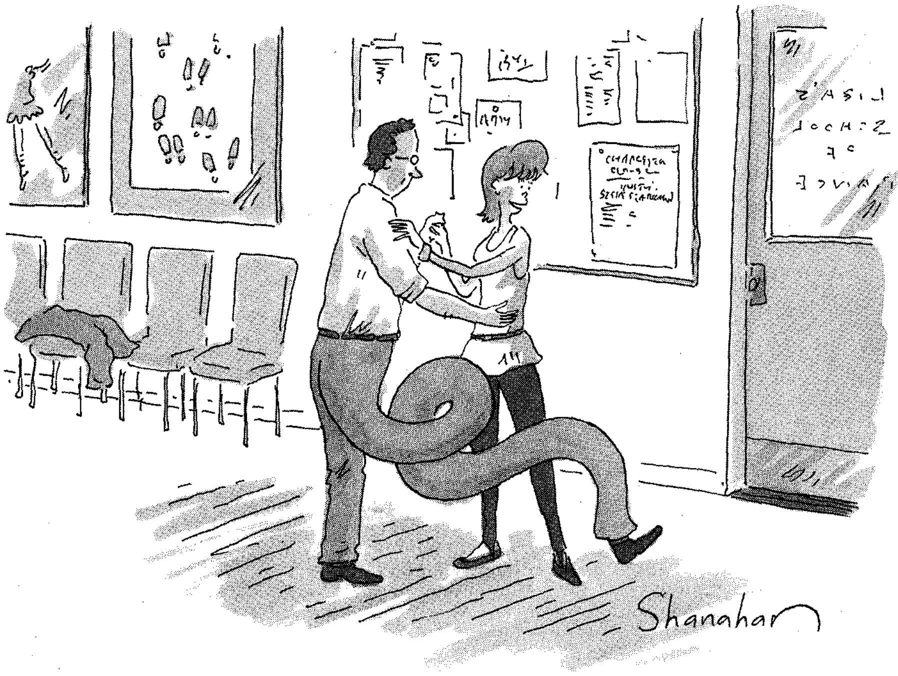
THE FINALISTS

"Geez, it's twenty-five to life already."
Richard Vidan, Lawndale, Calif.

"I'd love to come, but you know
the old ball and chain."
Pam Davis, Americus, Ga.

"Well, I really must be staying."
Henry Saveth, New York City

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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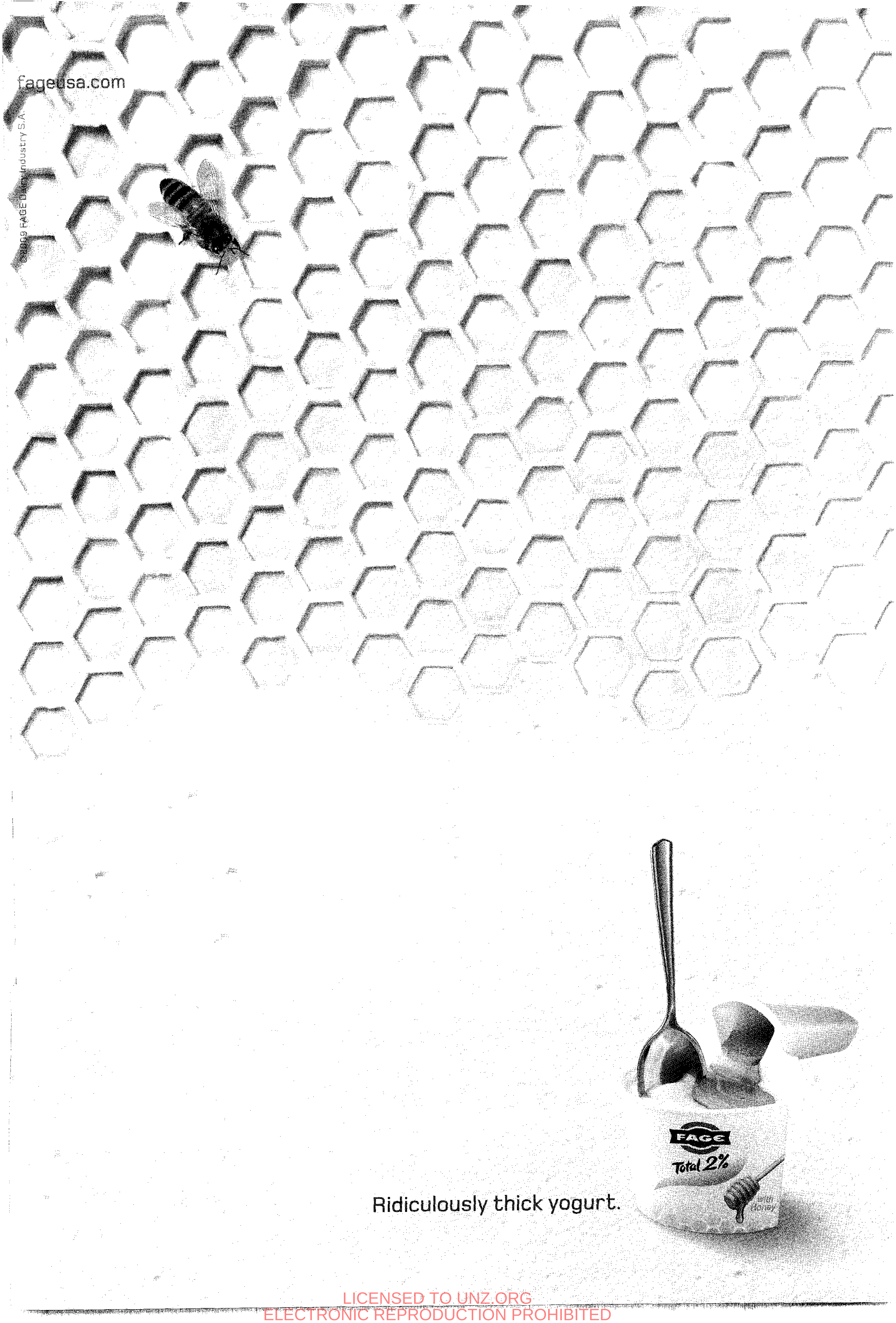
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